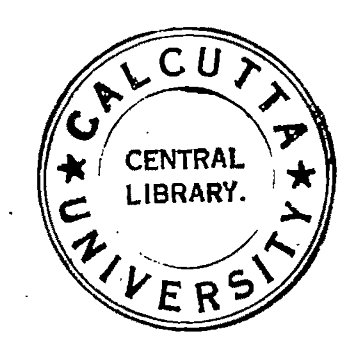
DEVELOPMENT OF INDO-MUSLIM CULTURE DURING THE DELHI SULTANATE (1206 – 1556)

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Arts)
of the University of Calcutta





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1998

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

A civilisation depends for its perfection more on the quality of mind which is brought to bear on the facts of life than on more material achievements, more on how it behaves than on what it possesses. A refinement in human relations is the true test of culture.

Within two decades of the Prophet's death, the Arabs had conquered Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Persia. Naturally they turned their eyes towards India thereafter. Under the Caliphate of Umar (634-44) & Usman(644-56), land approaches to India were discovered. During the time of Caliph Walid (705-15), Hajjaj bin yusuf, who was Governor of Iraq, sent his nephew and son-in-law, Muhammad bin Qasim, to Conquer the Indus valley. This young enterprising general brought Sindh and Multan under the overlordship of the Caliphate in the year 712 A.D.

By the end of the 7th century, before the occupation of Sindh, traders had in a good number settled on the Malabar Coast. By the middle of the 8th century, they spread over the whole of the Western Coast. Sheikhs and Darweshes made their appearance. The Hindu King of Malabar was converted to Islam. By the 10th century, the Eastern Coast on the South had a noticeable Muslim population. By the end of 14th century, Islam had permeated all parts of India, and the process was fully under way which led to the conversion of a large section of the Indian population to Islam and resulted in far-reaching cultural and spiritual changes outside the Muslim society.

At the time of Muslim invasion, India was torn with the conflict between Buddhism and Hinduism. The poignant theoretical controversy that was raging between Pundits and Priests on both sides overflowed into the fields of action. Throughout the country, there were constant feuds and fights and bloodshed was not rare.

The unity that India looked to was that of a common mental outlook. What India took care about was that she might be "a University of Culture", Comprising many and diverse racial habits, linguistic

orbits, geographical bounds and local politics and interests. She was not only not disturbed at her diversity of people but offered them opportunities for their unfoldment trusting in her genius that she would be able to knit them together into a beautiful whole.

Islam maintained a distinctive position of its own, in spite of its deeper identities with the essentials of Indo-Aryan religion. Islam brought with it vigour of a new faith that supplied the springs of adventure in life and the gift of a rich culture.

The culture brought into India by the Arabs or the Turks or later on by the Mughals was not such as would seriously disturb the Hindu tradition. Neither was it of a kind that the Hindu would reject off-hand nor did it create any sudden break in the continuity of the history of the Indian people. The underlying motif of the two cultures, Islamic and Hindu, was much the same. The difference lay only in their technique. When, therefore, the two met on a common soil, the action and reaction between them broadened the basis of both and led to a unity of out look and interests. The masses of the two communities began to feel the want of a new order of creative life, of co-operative effort for peaceful living.

The caliphs were lovers of learning. Between Arabia and India was established a kind of comradeship. Hindu works on astronomy, astrology, mathematics, medicine and philosophy began to be translated into Arabic. Sanskrit learning was admired and even readily patronised.

From fashions and festivals down to the very preparation of food, in social or in the household affairs, their habits were cast in moulds nearly alike. In the matter of dress too, the two styles continued to evolve a new costume, the Sherwani, the tight fitting Pyjama and the Turban, in which we can hardly detect any Arab or Central Asia influence. The court etiquette became uniform for both Mughal and Rajput. With the evolution of new social factors and common economic interests, the distinctions amongst the Hindu and Muslim masses gradually faded.

The Sufis acted as a great social force in moulding the character of medieval Indian society. There is a tradition of the Prophet in which he says "God has laid so much stress on the rights of a neighbour that the later almost holds the status of a relative", Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya often referred to this tradition and then add. "the right of a neighbour, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, is that you should advance him a loan, when he required it, help him when he is in need, visit him when he is sick, comfort him when he is involved in trouble and attend his funeral when he dies. He is not a true believer who annoys his neighbour". The sufistic definition of a half Muslim and a full Muslim is also interesting. According to the Sufi, "He is a half Muslim who is so pious that he acquires even the magical power to spread his carpet in mid-air to say his prayers, but a full Muslim is one who gets up early in the morning, says his prayers, goes about his daily work, earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, eats half the bread and shares the other half with the needy and the poor. The sharing of the fruit of his labour after earning it in a righteous manner makes him a full Muslim".

This doctrine of Sulh-i-Kul, or Universal brother hood had a great humanistic appeal behind it, which crossed all religious barriers, developed fellow-feeling between the two communities and electrified the process of Synthesis between the ancient culture of India and the one brought by the Muslims from Arabia, Iran and Central Asia.

Religious movements, which arose in the 15th and 16th centuries, are generally characterzied as variations of bhakti. A long line of saints ...... Prototypes of Nanak, Kabir and Chaitanya of the North ...., arose in the South and preached to both Hindu and Muslim a simple religion based on bhakti, or love of God. Their teachings reached every nook and corner of the country and gave it a shaking such as it had never received before.

The Sufi and Hindu mystic likewise met on the common platform of ecstatic communion with the Divinity, a state in which communal division finds no place at all. The cultural life of the common people took on the same colour in time, they were more under the influence of saints and

mystics than that of Pundits and Maulavis. In music, painting, architecture, as well as in economic deals, the two communities evolved a common outlook. Above all, there was the inexorable need ..... the downright necessity ..... of making a common home for both.

Though the Turko-Afghan rulers were Muslims and their religion was Islam, they made no attempt to impose their religious faith on the Hindus. They attempted to attract the common Hindus with their philosophy of equality of human beings. The door for Government services was open to all; personal merit was the only recommendation for appointment and promotion. The Hindus were not forced to give up their age-old traditions. No interference were made in the observance of their religious rites. This went a long way in winning the hearts of the Hindus for the Muslim rulers.

Living side by side and sharing in each other's joy and sorrow for a period over centuries was bound to change the respective manners and social behaviour of the two peoples. This process of invisible interaction between the members of the two religions, in due course led to the emergence of the Indo-Muslim Culture.

The topic of my thesis "Development of Indo-Muslim Culture during the Delhi Sultanate" (1206-1556) was alloted to me by the Ph.D. committee in the department of Arabic and Persian, Calcutta University, Calcutta. I have studied the subject in Six Chapters. The study is based primarily on original Persian sources, but I have made free use of works published in English, Urdu, Bengali and Hindi also. I have also made use of articles published in learned Journals in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Wherever Ibid has been used in the footnote in this thesis it always refers to the first work mentioned in the earlier footnote, in case more than one authority are cited there.

My thanks are due to Dr. Ihsan Karim Burke of the Department of Arabic and Persian, Calcutta University, under whose effective guidance this thesis is prepared.

I am deeply indebted to my revered teacher and guardian, Professor Mohammad Qamaruddin of the Department of Islamic History and Culture, Calcutta University for his valuable advice and help in the pursuit of my research work. He gave me encouragement at every stage in the preparation of this thesis and has always served for me as a perennial source of inspiration in my academic undertakings. Infact, I do not have suitable words at my command to thank him.

I am also indebted to my another revered teacher, professor Osman Ghani of the Department of Islamic History and Culture, Calcutta University for his many useful suggestions. I am greatful to Dr. Md. Manzoor Alam, Chairman, Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, for his valuable help. Dr. M.K.A. Siddiqui, Ex-Superintending Anthropologist, Anthropological Survey of India and Ex-Research Professor, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, also encouraged and helped me with his rich research experience. I am under deep obligation to my elder brother Mr. Md. Laique Ahmed, M.A. (Double), B.Ed., who helped me to solve many knotty problems in the course of my study.

I received learned suggestions and advices from Professor Manal Shah Al-Quadari, Professor Md. Rahatullah, Dr. Md. Amin and Dr. Md. Firoz of the Department of Arabic and Persian, Calcutta University.

CALCUTTA.
21st December, 1998.

AQUIL AHMED

ABBREVIATIONS

Afif	:	Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi by Shams Siraj 'Afif.
Badauni	:	Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh by Mulla 'Abdul Qadir Badauni.
Briggs	:	History of the Rise of the Mohomedan Power in India (English Translation of Tarikh-i-Firishta by Briggs, John).
Elliot & Dowson	:	The History of India as told by its Own Historians by Elliot & Dowson.
Habib	:	Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin by Muhammad Habib
Rogers & Beveridge	:	Memoirs of Jahangir (English Translation of Tuzak-i-Jahangiri by Rogers and Beveridge).

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CHAPTER - ONE

SALIENT FEATURES OF HINDUISM AND ISLAM

HINDUISM

Any religion need not be treated lightly, for it is not merely a point of contact between God and the individual, but also a source of inspiration for a new social order, a political pattern, a cultural ethos and all that is fine and lofty in any given society. This is as such true of Hinduism as of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

Hindu is the name given to the people of the Vedas by the ancient Iranians.[1] This usage was followed by the Greeks, Arabs and others. But the Vedic people called themselves 'Arayas', and that is why is their own ancient texts the term 'Hindu' is nowhere to be found. It is this name coined by foreigners from which has been derived 'Hinduism', to denote the form of religion followed by a Hindu.[2] It is too late in the day to try to dislodge the term from the meaning it has acquired. It is not necessary either, as there is no difficulty in understanding who a Hindu is. A Hindu is one who holds the Vedas[3] as the revealed books of religion.

The Vedic people were robust in mind and body, and their relationship with their gods was friendly, based on a manly affection and not on fear. Infact, they claim to be kinsfolk of the gods, and in their

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1. The origin of the name Hindu is interesting. The river Sindhu (Indus) marked the western frontier of the ancient Arya settlement in the Punjab. On the other side of the river lived the ancient Iranians. It was by the name of this river that the Iranians called the Arayas. But they could not pronounce the word Sindhu correctly; they would pronounce it as Hindu. So Hindu came to be the name by which the Iranians called the Arayas. In course of time the Arayas themselves picked up this name from their neighbours, the Iranians, and adopted it for themselves.
2. In very ancient days Hinduism was known as the Arya dharma.
3. Derived from the Sanskrit root vid which means 'to know' the word Veda came to mean 'knowledge of God'.

hymns one finds a free and frank spirit of give and take. The devotee pours a libation of butter on the sacrificial fire, and tells the king of gods, Indra, that he expects in return a copious supply of rain for his crops. These vigorous immigrants were mostly agriculturists, and rain was necessay for their very existence. Earlier in their life, possibly before they had discovered the art of cultivation and led a nomadic life, they used to worship the sun, the giver of warmth, as their chief deity. In the course of time we find that the wording and rhythm of the hymns, mantras as they were called, acquired a considerable amount of magical force and became almost as important as the meaning thereof. But the sturdy and simple nature of the Arya must have changed a great deal before this happened.

In Vedic times, we come acrross another term manava, derived from the name of the great Arya patriarch, Manu. It means the people of Manu, those who trace their origin from Manu and follow the 'path of Manu'.[1] Manu was the first to establish an Arya empire on the bank of the river 'Kubha' in the region now known as Kabul. It was he who initiated the Arya worship of One God and chalked out the path from which no true Arya could deviate. This path is made up of two essential virtues —— peace and unity —— sham-yoh,[2] as the sages called it.

The Vedic Aryas believed that their religion was true for all men and for all time as it determined the relationship between man and his

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1. Rigveda, viii, 30, 3. (Nirnayasagar edition).

2. ibid., i, 114, 2.

Maker. Based, as it is, on this fundamental thought, it may well be called the religion of man. Later on, no doubt, many schools of Philosophy and diverse forms of worship arose. But these were merely developments of the original Vedic religion to suit different lines of thought and different grades of human intellect. Hinduism is not identified with any narrow dogma. Elasticity of thought and breadth of vision are its principal characteristics. It is broad-based on the fundamental religion of man as evolved in the Sruti,[1] and justly calls itself the Sanatana Dharma or the eternal religion.

The evolution of Hindu religion and its philosophy, as we see it today, has not been a conscious process. Throughout the long centuries of ancient Indian history, one race after another entered the country from the north, each with its peculiar culture and peculiar set of ideas and contributed its quota to the growth of Indian thought. But strangely enough, while leaving its stamp on the basic Arya culture, each of these races, in its turn, lost its identity. For, who can identify and distinguish in India today its various ethnic elements the Scythian or the Hun, the Getae or the Gurjar? But these early immigrants or invaders from Central Asia do not, by any means, exhaust the sources of Hindu culture. Long before the Aryas entered India, a civilisation of a high order prevailed in this country. From the Ramayana we learn that Rama visited the death bed of his great Rakshasa antagonist, Ravana, and solicited from him

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1. i.e. the Vedas.

advice on state-craft. The same epic tells us that the monkey general of Rama, Hanuman, was a wise and learned person, whose counsel on various matters was sought and accepted by his master. These legends undoubtedly indicate the existence of a pre-Arya culture of high order of whose worth the Aryas were fully cognisant. The Indo-Aryan civilisation was to a considerable extent indebted to the civilisation that had preceded it. As will be seen later on, the Hindu did not lose his elasticity, the receptive qualities of his mind, even after the Turkish conquest. He reacted in a remarkable manner to the impact of a totally different kind of alien culture and produced a long line of saintly exponents of a newer, simpler and more agile phase of Hinduism than any that India had seen for a long time. It cannot be that the spirit of Kabir and Nanak, of Chaitanya and Tukoram is dead in the India of today. So many races, so many communities, have combined to impart to the web of Hindu life its wonderful texture and richness of hue.

The Vedas recognised the four varnas or castes in accordance with the attainments or occupations of man.[1] The Bhagavada Gita puts it very tersely: "I created four castes according to a person's occupation and mental attainments".[2] At the head were the Brahmans, graphically described in the Vedas as having come out of the Supreme Being.[3] It was the duty of a Brahman to study and to teach.[4] Not that others were not permitted to coultivate thinking. That would be absurd. But the Brahman specialised in

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1. Though known as early as the Rigveda period, the caste-system was not rigid in its earlier phases. Only at a later stage did it attain rigidity and the conditions of the Sudras especially became deplorable.

2. Bhagavada Gita, iv, 13.

3. Rigveda, x, 90, 10-11-12.

4. The Brahmans claimed four privileges, namely, (i) Archa (veneration), (ii) Dana (present, gifts etc.), (iii) Ajyeyata (freedom from oppression) and (iv) Abodhyata (immunity from capital punishment). Compare, R.C. Majumdar: Corporate Life in Ancient India, p.315.

the pursuit of knowledge, just as much as the Kshatriya did in the art of war and kingship, and the Vaishya in handicraft and commerce. But the inspiration in all branches of knowledge, whether it related to life spiritual or life material, came from the Brahman.[1] A Brahman was not to carry arms; he was not to speak in a vulgar tongue; he was to observe the rules laid down for taking food, and lastly, he was to observe chastity.[2] It should, however, be remembered that at a later period an instinct of self-preservation gave the caste system a rigidity which deprived Hinduism of a large portion of its elasticity. When the Brahman's outlook tended to become stereotyped, it was the Kshatriya who came forward to breathe new life into society. Instances of this are, indeed, innumerable but it is enough to mention only Janaka,[3] Krishna[4] and Gautama Buddha.

The Hindu sages recogised very early that in the mind of the individual there is a constant clash between the worldly duties to his society and his spiritual duties towards the Crerator. In order to reconcile these two, they divided the life of each man into four distinct stages or ashramas, that of the student (Brahmacharya), the householder (Garhasthya), the recluse (Vanaprastha) and the wandering spiritual teacher (Sanyasa). During the first stage a man leads a rigidly ascetic life, acquires knowledge and strength and prepares for the life of the householder; during the second stage he is called upon to discharge his

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1. If the Brahmans claimed four privileges, as cited in the previous note, they had also four duties, namely, (i) Brahmanyam (purity of blood), (ii) Pratirupacharya (proper way of living), (iii) Yasah (fame through the study of Veda etc.) and (iv) Lokapakti (intellectual and religious training of the people, as teacher sacrificial priest and purohita). Compare, R.C. Majumdar Corporate Life in Ancient India, p.315.

2. ibid, p.315.

3. Janaka was given the title and status of a Brahman through the teachings of Yajnavalka. R.C. Majumdar: Corporate Life in Ancient India, p.317.

4. It is to him that the text of the Bhagavada Gita owes its origin, though like Janaka and Buddha he was not a Brahman by birth.

duty to society and the State. The third stage of retreat and contemplation is likewise a preparation for the fourth stage, when he has to discharge his duty to his higher-self and to his Maker.[1]

The two forms of division taken together make up what is called Varnashrama Dharma —— the order of life according to orthodox Brahmanism. Yet deeper in its fundamentals and behind the conventions, Brahmanism provided for ample freedom of opinions and experiences. It was owing to this freedom that creeds and cults were abundantly growing up like vegetation during the rainy season, as the Mahabharata beautifully puts it.

The complete human individual can be likened to a mighty tree standing from its own roots and throwing out its branches and foliage in all directions. It can inhale nourishment from the air, if only it has roots deep down the soil. As long as a Hindu stuck to the basic truth of his life, he could receive, retain and assimilate all that the surrounding atmosphere gave him. Today well-nigh uprooted as he is, he is neither able to receive nor to give anything.

The term Dharma in the old days meant such law as governed a man in relation to himself, his family, society and State. It does not exactly mean religion, as is popularly thought. Its significance is more worldly. This meaning is clear from the fact that the Codes of Hindu Law are specifically entitled Dharmashastras. The best known of these Codes is the

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1. Swami Niredananda : Hinduism at a Glance, p.56.

Manu Samhita, based on an earlier text called the Manava Dharmashastra. These Codes derive their character from the mantras and Brahmanas of the Vedas.

The Vedas speak the truth about God, the soul and the creation. Such truths can hardly be realised by the mere exercise of brains. An appeal to a higher source is necessary in order to give us a glimpse of the Ultimate Truth. Even the highest human genius can never arrive unaided at a knowledge of the cause of things. The Vedas, therefore, are said to be revealed scriptures —— something heard, not somehing worked out by the human brain. Likewise, the mantras of the Vedas are things to be seen, and the sage who gives them out to the world is called the Rishi (or Seer). Be it understood, however,. that neither the hearing of the Sruti, nor the seeing of the mantras, is possible for any but the illumined, those who by concentration and meditation have reached a condition in which such great truths can be received. The Vedic hymns are thus to the Hindus something very much higher than the composition of ordinary poets. The Vedic Rishis may be called poets possessed by Truth.

The Vedas are known to be the earliest literary composition of man. They were originally three in number, namely the Rigveda, the Samaveda and the Yajurveda. Of these the Rigveda was the principal. A fourth, the Atharveda by name, was added to them later in order to meet the requirements of the Hindu society which was daily growing more and more

composite by the absorption of the pre-Aryas. Each of the four Vedas consists of two sections, namely, Samhita and Brahmana. The Samhita section contains hymns or mantras and the Brahmana section dwells on the meaning and use of these hymns.

The Rigveda has hymns to many gods in it, but there can be no doubt that the Rishi had already begun to conceive of One Supreme Spirit, One without a second (Ekam eva Advitiyam). The several gods, most of them nature forces, are referred to as manifestation of this One Spirit. Here is a typical hymn :

"One only Fire is kindled manifold, one only Sun is present to one and all, one only Dawn illuminates this all: that which is only one becomes this all."[1]

In the tenth book occurs the famous Purusha Sukta, a significant hymn addressed to the mighty Spirit pervading the whole Universe.

The Brahmanas have already been referred to. They expound the mantras and give directions with regard to rites and sacrifices. The rites relate to such sacraments as wearing the sacred thread, marriage and funeral, while the sacrifices known as yajnas consisted of lighting up the sacrificial fire and offering of the lives of various animals for a specific purpose.[2] It was principally against these animal sacrifices that the great Gautama raised his hand of protest so successfully in the 5th century B.C.

There is one portion of the Sruti or the Vedic literature which is

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1. Rigveda, viii, 58, 2.

2. The Hindus of yore did not worship gods and goddesses in images as they do now. Their worship consisted in reciting Vedic mantras and offering oblations in the "sacred" fire. This kind of worship is called yajna (sacrifice). The Brahmana sections of the Vedas describe the various kinds of yajna. The mantras contained in the Samhita sections have to be recited in the course of yajnas. From the Brahmana sections one learns when, how and which mantras have to be recited during the performance of any yajna.

better known than the rest. This portion, called the Upanishads[1], deals with higher spiritual thought and is more directly connected with the third or contemplative stage of man's life. The conception of God and His relationship with man that was already foreshadowed in the Rigveda has undergone a very high stage of development in these later books. Animal sacrifices find no encouragement in them. On the contrary, it is emphasized that the material adjuncts of a sacrificial rite are only for the lower grade of votaries and the real yajna is entirely an affair of the mind and spirit. A remarkable feature of the Upanishads is that they definitely stand for a harmony of intuition and intellect. They invaribaly go beyond reason and yet always plead for profound thinking, for knowing Him by means of clarified wisdom.

The bold speculations of the Upanishads developed in time into six well-known schools of Hindu philosphy[2]. All these schools take a definite stand on rationalims, and one at least of them —— the Samkhya —— disowns a personal God. The influence of this agnostic school is traceable in the philosophy of Buddhism which went a step farther and rejected the authority of the Vedas. It speaks a great deal for the dynamic character of Hinduism that in later centuries Buddha himself was acknowledged as an incarnation of God.

While schools of philosophy were being evolved for the enlightened, a number of popular works came into being to satisfy the spiritual

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1. The word Upanishad originally meant a "sitting, confidential secret sitting" and then a "secret teaching, secret doctrine". The Upanishads are many in number. Each of the four Vedas contains several Upanishads. Of these, the following may be remembered: Brihadaranyaka, Aitareya, Chhandogya, Taittiriya, Isha, Kena Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya and Shwetashwatara.

2. The six schools of Hindu philosophy are: Purva Mimansa (author Jaimini), Uttara Mimansa or Vedanta (author Vyasa), Samkhya (author Kapila), Yoga (author Patanjali), Nyaya (author Gotama) and Vaisheshika (author Konada).

cravings of the humbler folk. These, known as the Puranas[1]; are cast in the mould of myths and legends, and present in an attractive manner, easier to comprehend, not only ethical ideas but the more obtruse conceptions of mental philosophy. These Puranas as well as the two well-known epics —— the Ramayana (author Valmiki) and the Mahabharata (author Vyasa) —— tell us a great deal about ancient kings and ancient societies in India. To the Hindus, they are something more than mere epic poetry, for the Bhagavada Gita actually forms part of one of them (i.e. the Mahabharata), while several other cantos are recited as part of the ritual on various solemn occasions.

This is in bare and rough outline the religious thoughts of the Hindus, sufficient to give us an idea of the culture with which Islam came into contact in India. But what, again, is Islam? We shall presently come to it and try to make out the meaning of Islam and the culture it represents. For we can never find the remedy for the present-day trouble between the two communities, unless we know something about the working of their minds. We are apt to misread the history of medieval India, if we have not the knowledge of the mental background of the two peoples. It is only when we have the proper perspective of their attitude of mind that we can understand the conflicts and go down to the basis of the contact underlying them. From where else could spring from time to time the creative energy to overcome all conflicts, if it were not from this

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1. There are in all eighteen Puranas. Of these the names of the following may be remembered: Vishnu Purana, Padma Purana, Vayu Purana, Skanda Purana, Agni Purana, Markandeya Purana and Bhagavata. A portion of the Markandeya Purana is well-known to all Hindus as Devi Mahatmyam or Chandi. Worship of God as the Divine Mother is its theme. It is read widely by the Hindus on their sacred days.

deeper contact?

Let us see what impression Hinduism created on the best minds amongst the Muslims. We shall quote here two renowned Muslim savants of the past. They are Alberuni, who came to India with Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna in the 11th century, and Abul Fazl, who lived at the court of Akbar in the sixteenth.

Alberuni's writings give us an insight into the atmosphere of learning in Islamic countries. They also show to what extent this learning was indebted to the wisdom of the Hindus and of the Greeks. Indian mathematics, medicine, astrology, astronomy and philosophy were studied assiduously and the treatises on these subjects translated by zealous Arabic and Persian scholars. Sometimes these learned men visited India and sometimes Hindu pundits were taken to Baghdad to assist them in their researches. This cultural contact and the working of a common mental outlook is something that we should never forget. The present misunderstanding between the Hindu and the Muslim rests largely on the ignorance of each other's mental composition, as a result, in the first instance, of ignoring their cultural affinities.

In regard to the very cardinal point of faith, Alberuni finds Hinduism not much different from Islam. He says: "The Hindus believe with regard to God that He is One, eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free will, almighty, all-wise, living, giving life, ruling, preserving; one who is His sovereignty is unique, beyond all likeness and unlikeness, and that He does not resemble anything nor does anything resemble Him".[1]

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1. Alberuni's India, vol, 1, p.27.

Referring to the texts of Yoga, Samkhya and Bhagavada Gita, he observes: "This is what educated people believe about God. They call Him Isvara, i.e. self-sufficing, beneficient, who gives without receiving. They consider the unity of God as absolute, but that everything beside God which may appear as unity is really a plurality of things. The existence of God they consider as real-existence, because everything that exists, exists though Him".[1]

The following remarks of Alberuni relating to Hindu idol worship deserves our notice: "Our object in mentioning all this mad raving was to teach the reader the accurate description of an idol, if he happens to see one, and to illustrate what we have said before, that such idols are erected only for uneducated low-class people of little understanding; that the Hindus never made an idol of any super-natural being, much less of God; and lastly to show how the crowd is kept in thraldom by all kinds of priestly tricks and deceits. Therefore, the book Gita says ——. 'Many people try to approach me in their aspirations through something which is different from me; they try to insinuate themselves into my favour by giving alms, praise and prayer to something beside me. I, however, confirm, and make them attain the object of their wishes, because I am able to dispense with them".[2]

In spite of his appreciation of Hindu culture, Alberuni was pained at the conceit and self-sufficiency of the Hindus of his days. But he hoped, "If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change

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1. Alberuni's India, Vol. I, P.31.

2. op.cit., vol. I, pp. 111-13.

their minds, for their ancesters were not as narrow-minded as the present generation is"[1].

Alberuni pleaded for a sympathetic exchange of learning and refinement, and looked forward to a friendship that might grow out of mutual appreciation. At the same time, as a deep critic of human nature he did not overlook the follies of his own people and their share in bringing about misunderstanding. He had little hesitation in saying: "Repugnance increased more and more when the Muslims began to make inroads into their country —— Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed wonderful exploits by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions —— This is the reason too why the Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hands cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares and other places"[2].

In writing the history of Akbar's India, Abul Fazl went out of his way to depict at length the beauties of Hindustan. Coming to realise that he was digressing, he made the heart-felt confession that his anxiety proceeded from the love of his native country. Abul Fazl loved India and had a great regard for Hindus and a deep neighbourly feeling for them. It was but natural of him. To hate one's neighbour constantly is indeed a severe mental strain. He notes with admiration how the emperor, Akbar, tried his level best to convert the thorny field of enmity into a garden of

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1. Alberuni's India, vol.I, p.23.
2. op.cit., vol.I, p.22.

amity and friendship. Hindus and Muslims will be cured of their intolerance by listening to the message of this great humanist and historian of Mughal India: "The inhabitants of this land are religious, affectionate, hospitable, genial and frank. They are fond of scientific pursuits, inclined to austerity of life, seekers after justice, contented, industrious, capable in affairs, loyal, truthful and constant —— They are capable of mastering the difficulties of any subject in a short space of time and surpass their instructors, and to win the Divine favour they will spend body and soul and joyfully devote their lives thereunto. They one and all believe in the unity of God, and as to the reverence they pay to images of stone and wood and the like, which simpletons regard as idolatry, it is not so. The writer of these pages has exhaustively discussed the subject with may enlightened and upright men, and it became evident that these images of some chosen souls nearest in approach to the throne of God, are fashioned as aids to fix the mind and keep the thoughts from wandering, while the worship of God alone is required as indispensable".[1]

He continues: "The godliness and self-discipline of this people (i.e. the Hindus) is such as is rarely to be found in other lands".[2]

Earlier he asserted: "—— The commonly received opinion that Hindus associate a plurality of gods with the One Supreme Being has not the full illumination of truth, for although with regard to some points and certain conclusions, there is room for controversy, yet the worship of one God and

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1. The Ain-i-Akbari, vol.III, p.8.
2. op.cit., vol.III, p.9.

the profession of His Unity among this people appeared facts convincingly attested. It was indispensable in me, therefore, to bring into open evidence the system of philosophy, the degrees of self-discipline, and the gradations of rite and usage of this race in order that hostility towards them might abate and the temporal sword be stayed a while from the shedding of blood, that dissensions within and without be turned to peace and the thornbrake of strife and enmity-bloom into a garden of concord. Assemblies for the discussion of arguments might then be formed and gatherings of science suitably convened".[1]

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1. The Ain-i-Akbari, vol.III, p.2.

ISLAM

The faith of Islam is clear and evident. There is little difficulty in understanding it. Even a new-born baby is supposed to be able to take it straightway to its heart. The Muslim baby, when it is born, is told: "God is great. He is great, and there is none beside Him worthy of worship ———" This faith, which contains in it the good of all religions, revealed earlier, was meant for mankind. It was new only in its bearing; it was not new in the sense of being novel.

Islam means surrender to the will of God. A Muslim is one who gives himself up entirely to God to the exclusion of all others. He believes that the world of nature has no choice but to obey God's eternal decrees, and that in this obedience lies peace, prosperity, happiness and the salvation of man. Just as there is a set pattern and a meaningful design in nature, there is one for man as well which indicates how he has to behave both individually and collectively to escape destruction. By following the right way, he would attain happiness in this world and bliss in the next.

The second important belief in Islam concerns Muhammad as the messenger of God. He is the last of the long line of the Prophets, of whom he is the seal. He is the perfect man, a path finder and a teacher. As a reformer, a guide and a leader he presents a religion which has no priestly hierarchy and involves no apostolic succession. Islam is essentially a practical creed, it takes man for what he is. Its

requirements are easy and simple, it attempts to level the barriers of caste, colour and class, and takes its stand on the bedrock of love, liberalism and brotherhood. The Quran says, "O people! be fearful of God who has created you all from the same single soul". This unity of man is of great social value, it removes all discriminations in human society based on social distinction, economic exploitation, racial discrimination and subjugation of women. It enables the humblest of the humble and the lowest of the low to rise to the highest position.

The holy Prophet, who expounded a common religion for mankind in conformity with the universal sources of all religions, sent messages to numerous rulers of different countries outside Arabia. Yet Arabia was the original home of this faith of Islam, and it was here that the stage of its first action was laid out. In order to be directly applied to the needs of the people of this country, it was made to suit their understanding and habits. The religion that was given in the first place to them was such as they wanted and could work out in their daily life. It was plain enough for their untutored mind and good enough for their sophisticated soul. True to the basic need of an earnest and artless folk, Islam proved equally true to humanity at large. It could, therefore, easily and rapidly find its way into countries far and near, where people had been entangled in the meshes of complex metaphysics or elaborate rituals, and were fretting for the freedom of a simple faith. In a sense, Islam did not evolve any knotty

dogma in the beginning or at any time. The one clear cry of the religion of the Quran was: " —— There is one and only one God. He is eternally besought of all. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable to Him".[1]

The land of the Arabs is a vast desert. It gave them little food and less comfort. They led a nomadic life and lived amidst frequent fights between men and men, and between tribes and tribes. They knew no artificialities. So, though they used to quarrel often and drink wine oftener, they brought out of their hearts sincere good poetry. Being intensely tribal, the Arabs had naturally set up many gods. But in reality they did not obey those gods, just as they did not submit to any political masters. On the contrary, the worship of those tribal gods only produced tribal factions. While they were themselves poor and in want of peace, they used to see all around many rich countries peacefully carrying on rich trade that happened to pass through their own country. Tremendous love of personal independence clouded their visions of unity. They could not yield to their little gods; they could not come to terms with each other. They had no peace anywhere. All the while they yearned wistfully for peace and unity.

To such a people the faith of submission was brought by the holy Prophet. For, Islam means "submission to God"; it means as well the religion of peace.[2] But they could not bow down to small things, nor would

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1. The Quran, CXII, 1-4.

2. op.cit., III, 19.

they purchase peace for little consolation. Their strong love of self would not permit them to accept anything as superior, which they could reach by their knowledge or which they could measure by their sense of limited entities.

Yet from the known to the unknown there should be some connecting links. The Arabs were always in the presence of one unbroken vast Nature —— the Nature of their limitless desert. They were quite at home with a reality that is visible endlessness —— endless yet existent. The idea of One God, who is far, far greater than any individual, than any of their known rivals, gave actual unity to their life. Having no rival, God is One. He is awful too. For does He not hold the whole creation within Him as does the mighty and severe sky overhead hold their endless desert-country? But then, is God only a replica of Nature? Not at all. He is merciful, compassionate and gracious, notwithstanding the grim fact that He is the "King of the Day of Judgement".[1] The Muslim rosary has ninety-nine beads corresponding to His attributes, in which the attributes of love and mercy overshadow those of might and majesty.

Recognition of the unity of God involves going out of oneself and doing one's best for the sake of others. The doctrine of social service in alleviating and helping the needy constitutes an integral part of Islamic teaching. Piety is useless in the absence of active welfare service to the needy. The Prophet once asked "Do you love your Creater? If so, love your fellow-beings first". He is only a half-Muslim who performs miracles through

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1. The Quran, I, 1-3.

piety full Muslims are simple folk who earn their bread by righteous means and share it with others. The Prophet said, "He is not a Muslim who does not wish for others what he desires for himself". Islam classifies people into two categories, good and bad. Good is indicated by the term saleh or righteousness, which is a term of eithico-religious excellence. The Quran has not left us in doubt as to what constitutes good deeds. They are to worship God, to be good and kind to fellow-beings, to respect parents, to speak kindly to everyone, to help the poor, needy and the orphans, to pay alms and to practise moral concepts such as courage, fortitude, patience and generosity. Man should never do wrong to others because God never does wrong to anybody. One should try to pardon others because God Himself is always ready to forgive and be compassionate.

Through submission to Islam and oneness of God, the people of Arabia reached a unique unity. A nation grew out of this faith. It is owing to this kind of growth that the Muslims were a nation belonging not to a geographical wholeness but to a spiritual fraternity. Brotherhood of faith rather than political nationalism held together the Muslims of yore. Unity of God formed the background of the unity of the people. The pagan Arabs loved equality dearly, but in the sense that one was in no way superior to another. With Islam they started realising that they all were equal by virtue of being creatures of One God.[1] Islam set flowing amongst them the stream of like-mindedness through the rock of individuality. Thus

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1. The Quran, XLIX, 13.

Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) being the Messenger of this new religion proved to be the maker as well of a new nation.

Indeed, the religion of the nomadic people was naturally free and simple. What the people were suffering from and what remedy they needed and what they could receive —— these the Prophet saw through. It was the Prophet's deep insight into human mind that caused the quick spread of Islam throughout the world. It was let in wherever people were looking for faith as the first principle of social life.

Islam proved to be a dynamic force which changed the course of human history. Its two revolutionary concepts, the unity of God and the unity of man, pushed the Arabs to the heights of intellectual glory; it made them seize the sceptre of might empires; it gave them sufficient strength, wisdom, vitality and insight to sustain their power for centuries, and it offered them the ideal of equality and justice that would level the barriers of caste, colour and class, and take its stand on the bedrock of humanity. Moreover it lapt before the image of their leader, the holy Prophet, whose achievements within a decade in Madina, inspired them to believe that nothing was impossible.

Being as wide as humanity, the Quran makes peace with all religions by saying that they have a common origin. It is the one religion that is sent down to man at different times and different places through different messengers; but they only carry the parts of one common religion. Islam

has thus no war with other religions as such. Likewise, the consmopolitan character of Hindu religion and the universal approach of its philosophy always leave wide open the door for mutual understanding.

In time of war, the Quran warns, women, children, old men, monks and the whole civil population are not to be subjected to any cruelty; churches and synagogues have even to be defended by the Muslims just as they would defend mosques. The first Caliph, Abu Bakr (632-34), issued the following order to his army: "Be just; the unjust never prosper. Be valiant; die rather than yield. Be merciful; slaying neither old men nor women nor children. Destroy neither fruit trees nor grains nor cattle. Keep your word even to your enemy. Molest not those who live retired from the world".[1]

Simplicity and devoutness marked the life of the early Islamic conquerors. The second Caliph, Umar (634-44), while entering Jerusalem went walking pulling the reins of the camel on which his slave was seated. The master and the slave were riding on the camel alternately every three miles. It just so happened, that as they were drawing near Jerusalem, it was the turn of the slave to ride, who, however, at this juncture wanted to get down in favour of the Caliph. But the Caliph insisted on the strict Islamic equality of man. This camel alone was enough to carry all his stately equipage which was made up of a small tent, a bag of corn and another of dates, a woodenbowl and a flask of leather. The invincible

1. M.N. Roy : The Historical Role of Islam,

general, Khalid, called "the sword of God", had during his whole life nothing more than his arms and his horse.

Soldiers of such generals could ill-afford to kill and plunder at will. On the contrary, their will must have been softened by the teachings of their faith and moulded by the examples of their generals. Besides, however powerful the army of Islam might have been, it could not have conquered, for less occupied, vast countries if the people thereof had not wished them well, even welcomed their arrival. Sometimes the army of Islam got active support from sections of the conquered people. To the simplicity of faith Islam added democracy in its social system. The world was conquered far more by these two gifts than by the sword.

The Arab conquest of kingdoms practically came to an end within about a hundred years after the passing away of the Prophet. The Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258) started particularly with a peace programme. Its activity was signalised by setting up the "City of Justice", as Baghdad was called. Now onwards, for about four hundred years, more glorious and memorable conquest of knowledge was made. Not occupation of territories but illumination of mind became the abiding passion of Islam. The command of Islam, "Seek knowledge even if it is found in China", guided the activities of the faithful. Rulers joined hands with scholars in the creation of the marvels of Muslim culture.

Al-Kindi (d.873), Abu Bakr Razi (865-935), Al-Farabi (870-950), Ibn Sina (980-1037) and Al-Ghazzali (1058-1111) are some of the notable names

amongst the early Muslim savants. The world owes a great deal to them. Europe was in those days drowned in medieval darkness. Reason was being ruthlessly put down by the Christian Church. It was through the Muslim philosophers and scientists that the light that had been lit by the sages of ancient Greece was found and help up high. It was this flame kept burning by the Muslim that some time later on kindled the Renaissance in Europe. The heads of the Islamic States and religion not only patronised the scholars on their own, but also gave shelter to such persecuted Western thinkers as were still trying to feed the fire of their ancient freedom of thouhght. Not only the Muslim savants but also the Caliphs and Sultans were upholders of Reason. The devotion to rationalism continued till about five hundrd years after the Prophet. With Ibn Rushd[1] (1126-1198) we come to the last and greatest of Muslim rationalists. He held that by reason alone could one reach the truth. Here is a typical saying of his: "The religion peculiar to philosophers is the study of that which is, for no sublimer worship can be given to God than the knowledge of Him and His reality. That is the noblest action in His eyes; the vilest is taxing, as error as error and vain presumption, the efforts of those who practise this worshiup, and who in this religion have the purest of religions".

The Islamic social order follows the trend of the religious. The bond of brotherhood in religion is kept alive all through the other spheres of life. The State becomes a democratic organisation. Because an ordinary human being could not be superior to others, the head of the State is there

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1. This Spanish philosopher is famous for his Commentaries on Aristotle.

as the vicegerent of God. Both with Hinduism and Islam ultimate sovereignty lies with God. And in a godly kingdom there must be peace for all. The State is, therefore, to see that every Muslim has the means to live equally. The State is to give every Muslim either work or charity. The legal alms, called Zakat, were first collected by the Prophet himself generally for the relief of the poor and mainly for the maintenance of the army. His successors followed the practice till, in the process of times, other taxes and tributes were levied for the working of the government. The paying of alms was then left to private peity and social goodwill. As all the Muslims are equal, they cannot be governed by any man-made law. God alone is supreme over all. The law that would be worth obeying could come from Him and Him alone. Thus it is that Muslim life —— individual, social and political, is ruled by the Divine law. The course of events in the material world too is determined by and must respond to the Divine law. The desire to know the law of God operating in Nature led to scientific investivgation and the growth of scientific knowledge. It made the people of Islam the father of modern science. It was from the Muslims that Europe imbibed the true scientifc spirit and learnt from them their first lessons in the physical sciences.

Muslim jurists, however masterly, could not make or alter this law. Laws being made by God, the jurists could but find out which law was applicable to any particular case. When later, it became evident that human affairs could not all be explained or controlled directly by the verses of

the Quran, supplementary laws were framed out of the events of the Prophet's life and his comments on men and matters.[1] The Prophet's talk to his associates and his observations on sundry affairs were collected with great labour and care, and given the title of Hadis or Traditions. The Shariat or the Code of Traditions sought to cover the field not directly touched by the Quranic laws. Further development of law was embodied in the"Analogies" and the Ijma. The former were deducted from the Quran and the Hadis, while the latter included points of law established by common consent.

Islam spread rapidly. It was the momentum of a new faith that brought about its phenomenal advance. The whole of the Near East, the upper half of Africa and a large part of southern Europe came under its sway in the course of three quarters of a century, though it took three centuries before a foundation could be laid in Northern India. All of a sudden the Islamic polity expanded from a single City State of Madina to a vast empire scattered over three continents. The Turkish and Afghan Muslims, who came to India as representatives of conquering Islam, did not like the Arabs, and the Persians represented its cultural aspect. The generous humanism of the early Caliphs was replaced by the adventurous militarism of the Ghaznavids, Ghorids and some of the early Sultans of Delhi. Islam in Arabia itself was rather a spent force by the time the conquering Turkish Amirs poured into India. For a while these adventures were carried forward by their rugged and virile life-spring. No doubt,

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1. Muhammad Ali: Translation of the Holy Quran, Chapter on "Relation to Sunnah".

even in the midst of destruction, they sowed far and wide certain seeds of construction. But these seeds took time to germinate. Consequently, the first period of big conquests passed in an atmosphere of animosity and suspicion. It was but human. For, the process of conqust always leaves some open wounds both on the conquerors and the conquered, and there can be no rapproachment till time has healed these wounds. It is only after the wounds have healed that mutual suspicion begins to abate and it becomes possible to create a new order on a newer and broader basis.

Sheer military zeal ceased to dominate the Muslims when they were no longer content with raiding India from outside but chose to settle down as children of the soil. Slowly they woke up to the realities of the situation, and as rulers increasingly felt the vital need of a better understanding with their Hindu subjects. The Sultans, the Sheikhs and the Ustads in their several spheres did whatever was possible in the circumstances to bring about a synthesis. This synthesis grew richer in its colour and deeper in its penetration through ages. The result is, there is hardly any aspect of the living Indian civilisation of today in which the original angularities of the different races have not been considerably rounded off.

CHAPTER TWO

ISLAM'S EARLY CONTACTS WITH INDIA

The wealth of India had its attraction. Muslim traders were drawn to it much earlier than the conquerors. By the end of the 7th century, before the occupation of Sindh, traders had in a good number settled on the Malabar Coast. By the middle of the 8th century, they spread over the whole of the Western Coast. Mosques were built. Sheikhs and Darweshes made their appearance. The Hindu king of Malabar was converted to Islam.[1]

In the far South, too, traders had their early settlements. Even before Malik Kafur's invasion, there were Muslim traders there. By the 10th century, the Eastern Coast on the South had a noticeable Muslim population. On the North, Sindh and Multan had of course been conquered early in the 8th century. But even in the unconquered territories of Kathiawar and Konkan, Muslim merchants grew in number, wealth and influence. Hindu rulers gave them many facilities. They were given lands freely for building houses and accorded liberty to practise their own faith.[2] It happened once, probably in the 12th century, that the Hindus of Cambay attacked the Muslim merchants and destroyed their mosque. An inquiry was held, and the Hindu Raja heard the latter's complaints with

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1. This event was until a few decades earlier celebrated solemnly. At the installation ceremony of the Zamorin, he was shaved and dressed like a Muslim and was crowned by a Mapilla.

2. Silsilat-ut-Tawarikh of Sulaiman Tajir as quoted in Elliot & Dowson, Vol.1, p.4.

sympathy and granted them money for building a new mosque. The ruler of the petty State of Tafan, bordering on the Salt-range, also showed great favour to the Arab settlers in his territory.[1]

Within two decades of the Prophet's death, the Arabs had conquered Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Persia. Naturally they turned their eyes towards India thereafter. Under the Caliphate of Umar (634-44) and Usman (644-56), land approaches to India were discovered.[2] During the time of Caliph Walid (705-15), Hajjaj bin Yusuf, who was Governor of Iraq, sent his nephew and son-in-law, Muhammad bin Qasim, to conquer the Indus Valley. This young and enterprising general brought Sindh and Multan under the overlordship of the Caliphate in the year 712 A.D.

Arabia was then in the full flush of a new life, sprung out of a dynamic faith. This triumphant faith had to be planted wherever her armies could each. A band of victorious Arabs under Muhammad bin Qasim were led into the territory of Sindh. His task was made easy by the internal condition of the country. It was that Ibn Qasim had the passive assistance of the Buddhists and also the active support of the Jats and other cultivating classes. Those were the depressed elements of the country, who in many ways were harassed by the new Brahman usurper, Raja Dahir. Not that these Jats were unpatriotic by nature. For, three hundred years later these very people resisted an important invasion of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna with great bravery and forced him to flee. On

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1. Sulaiman Tajir speaks high of the beauty of Tafan. Says he: "The women are white, and the most beautiful in India." Elliot & Dowson, Vol.1, p.5.

2. Bilazuri's Futuh-ul-Buldan as quoted in op.cit. Vol.1, pp.116-17.

another occasion they encountered Mahmud in a sea fight on boats.

At the time of the Muslim invasion, India was torn with the conflict between Buddhism and Hinduism. The poignant theoretical controversy that was raging between Pandits and priests on both sides overflowed into the fields of action. Throughout the whole country, there were constant feuds and fights, and bloodshed was not rare. Occassionally cold-blooded massacre of monks and destruction of monasteries also took place. Important Hindu Kshatriya Rajas and, later, Rajput Ranas were generally upholders of Brahmanic tenet. Usurpation of kingship by Brahman ministers at the expense of ruling Kshatriya clans was also a striking feature of Hindu polity of the times, proving thereby the hold of Brahmanic authority on the people at large. Sometimes again, Buddhist rulers were supplanted by Brahmans. Raja Dahir of Sindh, at the time of Muhammad bin Qasim's invasion, was such a Brahman usurper. Disaffected Buddhists were easily prevailed upon by the Arab general to open the gates of Sehwan fort on the promise that he would not touch the life and property of the Buddhists, a promise that was fully honoured. In fact, Indian attention was wholly engrossed in the country-wide internal struggle between Brahmans and Budhists. That struggle seemed to absorb entirely their thoughts and interests. That struggle presented itself as the only outstanding reality before the eyes of the Indians who practically did not realise the seriousness of the Islamic inroads till at length they were face

to face with the establishment of a Muslim empire in India.

Sindh, however, was smoothly occupied. Not so easily could it be directly ruled. Much of the administration was left in the hands of the Hindus.[1] The Arab Governor was satisfied with overlordship and did not interfere with the internal order of things. Brahmans were allowed to repair temples and follow their own religion. Under the wise and popular Arab government, they were appointed to pacify the country. Even the collection of revenue was to be managed by Brahmans.[2]

Jizya was levied. By allowing another people to conquer one's country, one automatically imposes on oneself certain disabilities. Being conquered, one does not anywhere start with equality. Yet, humiliation was not writ large on Jizya at the time. It was a tax to be paid by the conquered to the Islamic government in consideration of protection. The conquered people were looked upon as Zimmis i.e. protected people. Islamic law accepted the moral obligation to protect subject races ----- their lives, properties as well as beliefs.

When the Hindus made an appeal to Muhammad bin Qasim for freedom of worship, the latter referred it to Hajjaj, who wrote: "As they have made submission and have agreed to pay taxes to the Caliph, nothing more can be properly required from them. They have been taken under our protection and we cannot, in any way, stretch our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given them to worship their gods. No body

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1. Chach Nama, pp.208-13.
2. op.cit, p.214.

must be forbidden or prevented from following his own religion.[1]"

History of foreign occupation, nowhere in the world, has had the simple grandeur of such a proclamation. It is full of the idea of benevolence and is not dictated by diplomacy. Arabia, so long as the memory of the Prophet did not fade, was capable of looking at conquests from a broad human point of view.

The Caliphs were lovers of learning. Between Arabia and India was established a kind of literary comradeship. Hindu works on astronomy, astrology, mathematics, medicine philosophy began to be translated into Arabic. Sanskrit learning was admired and even readily patronised.[2]

INDIA--GHAZNA--GHOR

Raja Jaipal of Lahore looked with suspicion upon the rise of a small territory not far from the borders of India. It was the kingdom of Ghazna. Its ruler was Sabuktagin. He was a danger to India. Jaipal gathered a large army. In right royal manner he marched out of India to chastise this chief of Ghazna. It is not clearly known how this expedition progressed, but the final result was that Jaipal returned to his country having agreed to pay a tribute to Ghazna. Once he was back safely to his kingdom, he did not act up to the terms of the treaty. This brought about a clash between Ghazna and India.[3]

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1. Chach Nama, pp.212-13.
2. Islamic Culture, October, 1932, pp. 628-30.
3. Tarikh-i-Yamini by Abu Nasr al-Utbi as quoted in Elliot & Dowson, Vol.11, pp.19-24.

Sultan Mahmud, succeeding to the throne of Ghazna, inherited his father's enmity with India. He made several incursions into India, at first under the pretext of non-fulfilment of the treaty. But this flimsy ground was soon forgotten by all parties. He longed to be a conqueror pure and simple and astounded the world by his military feats. He did not bother about retaining possession over the conquered countries. What he was really keen on was to acquire the wealth of other lands, and with it to make his own Ghazna the richest capital city of the world. He was a patron of poets; this arose from a desire to be remembered by posterity through their writings.[1] When he returned from an expedition he invitably brought home various relics of his conquest, and he had them laid out in his city for poeple to gaze and admire. He lavishly beautified his palace so that all could wonder at his vast and valuable treasures.[2] Contrary to popular belief, religion was not his forte. For, he plundered both infidel and true believer with equal ardour. If it suited his purpose, he called an invasion a holy war; if it did not, he called it by some other name.

The following story is supposed to give a view of his mind on religion: "When Mahmud was gaining victories and demolishing idols in India, the Hindus said that Somnath was displeased with these idols, and that if he had been satisfied with them, no one could have destroyed on injured them. When Mahmud heard this, he resolved upon making a

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1. Four hundred scholars and poets were attached to Sultan Mahmud's court. Vide Sachau's Preface to Alberuni's India, p.1.

2. Ghazni, because of its beautiful edifices under the Sultan, was called arus-al-bilad. Vide India under the Muslim Rule, Vol.IV, Part-I, P.39.

campaign to destroy this idol, believing that when the Hindus saw their prayers and imprecations to be false and futile, they would embrace the faith" (i.e. Islam).[1]

What Mahmud did and what chroniclers thought afterwards may not tally. For chroniclers are, by profession, usually orthodox scholars. Religion was very far from being the central motive of Mahmud's raids of India. He was more eager to plunder India than to Islamise her.

What he felt was that the collapse of a temple would mean the collapse of the courage of his infidel enemies. That was why he attacked the temple. In fact, Mahmud was swayed more by military zeal than by iconoclastic fury. He plundered with equal enthusiasm the Muslim kingdoms of Iran and Central Asia.

Sultan Mahmud had no desire to establish an empire in India. But his invasions laid bare the weakness of this country and ultimately led to its subjugation. He happened to lay the first stepping stone of the Muslim empire in India. The event was the occupation of Lahore in the course of one of his expeditions. It was not at all the result of any conscious planning, nor was it realised at the time that the existence of a Muslim outpost at Lahore might be laden with first class political significance. King Nanda of Kalanjar attacked the king of Qannauj. At the invitation of the latter, Sultan Mahmud intervened. Trilochanpala, king of Lahore, came forward to obstruct his advance, but was slain in battle. Mahmud followed

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1. Elliot & Dowson, Vol.II, P.469.

up his victory by annexing Lahore for Ghazna.[1]

Amir Masud was a generous patron of learning and as such had won high praise from Alberuni.[2] The next Amir, Bairam bin Masud, caused the tales of Panchatantra to be translated into Persian under the title of Kalilah wa Dimnah.[3]

The Muslim outpost at Lahore came under Muhammad Ghori when he took possession of Ghazna itself. He placed one Ziyauddin in charge of Lahore. Sometime afterwards Prithviraj, king of Ajmer, advanced with other friendly Hindu chiefs to give battle to Muhammad Ghori at Tarain, near Thanesar.Muhammad Ghori was badly wounded and retired to Lahore and finally returned to Ghazna. Prithviraj kept laying siege to the Muslim fortress. Having held it for over a year, Ziyauddin at last surrendered. Though inferior to Mahmud of Ghazna in military talents, Ghori had the larger ambition of empire-building. Undaunted by his first failure, he returned to India a year later to fight Prithviraj and his allies. This time again they met at Tarain. The Indian forces were surprised in a night attack and defeated.[4] Ghori forthwith went to Delhi. The Raja of Delhi made no resistance; instead, he paid a heavy tribute and saved Delhi from an attack. Ghori, however, in order to explore further possibilities, placed his trusted and valiant general, Qutbuddin Aibak, in charge of the fort of Kuhram.[5]

Qutbuddin made up his mind not to stop where he was. He created

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1. Habib, PP.46-47.
2. Alberuni dedicated his work, the Qanun-i-Masuid, to Sultan Masud bin Sultan Mahmud. The Qanun-i-Masudi deals with astronomical tables.
3. The first translation of the Panchtntra into Arabic was rendered from Old Persian by Ibn al-Muqaffa. Compare E.G.Browne : Literary History of Persia, Vol.II, P.350.
4. Tajul Maasir, PP. 96-109.
5. op.cit., p.116.

an opportunity and attacked Delhi, carrying it by assault. The planting of the Crescent flag at Delhi marks the foundation of the Muslim rule in India. While Qutbuddin held sway over the new kingdom of Delhi, his lieutenant, Bakhtyar Khalji, in his turn, pushed the arms of Islam to far-off Gour, and annexed the provinces of Bihar and Bengal.

CHAPTER - THREE

SPIRIT OF THE GOVERNMENT UNDER TURKO-AFGHAN RULE

Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak carried into execution the plan of founding a Muslim empire in India. Mentally he stood mid-way between an empire-builder and a conqueror. With the kingship of Qutbuddin, the position of the Muslim empire in India took a new turn. It was the master stroke of Qutbuddin that was directly responsible for an abrupt change from the Ghorian political dependence into an independent Indo-Muslim empire. The monarchy of Qutbuddin was moulded by Indian conditions and interests. The political centre automatically shifted from Ghazna and Ghor to Delhi. It is interesting to note here that in the evolution of the Indo-Muslim Kingship India captivated the heart, mind and soul of the Muslim rulers. She engrossed their whole attention and thought with the result that they lost their active interest in the Islamic countries. They were cut asunder from their source of political inspiration. They began to identify themselves wholly with Indian interests which were their own as they Indianized themselves in the course of time.

A keen sense of justice characterised Qutbuddin's monarchy. He was a well-wisher of his subjects. Promotion of peace and prosperity engaged his thought as well.

The greatest king of this line, Sultan Iltutmish was also an ardent conqueror. He celebrated his victories in the Hindu manner by erecting a Jayastambha or a victory tower (i.e. the Qutb Minar). Under his aegis began the contact between Hindu and Muslim arts, especially in architecture.[1]

Balban regarded kingship as a sacred trust, it was, according to him, a divine viceregency. It did not signify a man-made institution of political control and guidance, it had the manifestation of the divine will, that caused its existence.

If the grand status of kingship, declared Balban, that God had bestowed on the ruler with a view to look after the welfare of the people, was not upheld in the right spirit, and royal dignity was made to tarnish itself by evil deeds, then on the Day of Judgement the ruler would have to face penalty of worst nature for misdeeds and crimes committed during his reign. Because, firstly, for a monarch there could be nothing higher and nobler in this world than the status of kingship, which he had failed to maintain, and secondly, the policy of government as executed by him was aginst the law of God.

We thus see that in the very infancy of the Delhi Sultanate, when, elsewhere, the sword was a decisive factor in the usurpation of political power and supremacy and in the making and unmaking of the State, a mightier power than the sword itself crept up in order to justify the very existence of the State, based not on the principles of brutalforce,

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1. There are three beautiful structures belonging to the reign of Sultan Iltutmish: (i) The Quwat-ul-Islam Mosque & (ii) the Qutb Minar, both at Delhi; and (iii) the Arhai din ka Jhonpra Mosque at Ajmer. All the three buildings are excellent examples of the architectural activity of the Sultan.

usurpation and exploitation, but on a stable, vitalizing and humane force. It was the fear of the Day of Judgement and the sanctimonious aspect of the divine will in kingship which were instrumental in crushing the brute in the king and in letting loose forces of humanising tendencies which succeeded, to a great extent, in culturalizing the institution of monarchy. The effect of such a cultural force was that kingship became less absolutist in practice and more limited in its authoritative range and scope. Balban was the Sultan who made a conscious effort in culturalizing the State.

The reign of Sultan Balan is noted for the patronage he gave to literature. Likewise it is worthy of mention that many Muslim kings, who were fleeing from the wrath and ravages of the terrible Chingiz Khan, obtained shelter in the court of this kindly monarch.[1] He used to make a good humoured-flourish of his gracious protection of these royal refugees, and he was proud of the patronage he extended to poets and men of letters.

His two sons, Prince Muhammad, the martyr, and Prince Bughra Khan, set up and supported their own literary societies. The famous poet, Amir Khusrau, was the teacher of the elder prince. Khusrau had a genuine admiration for Hindustan. His father came from Balkh, but he was born in India. His literary works make affectionate reference to

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1. According to Firishta, more than fifteen princes from the different parts of Central Asia, Iraq and Persia were given royal refuge at Balban's court. Vide Briggs, Vol.I, pp.252-53, 258-59.

Hindustan.[1] Amir Khusrau loved the Hindi language too. "You will not find the Hindi language inferior to Persian". His appreciation of Hindu womanhood is recorded in the following beautiful lines :

Khusru aisi preet kar jaise Hindu joye,
Poot parai karne jal jal koila hoye.

(Substance : Khusrau, in love rival the Hindu wife,
For the dead's sake she burns herself in life).

It was this versatile genius who brought into our Indian music the styles known as Khayal and Tarana, both delightful mixtures of the Persian and Hindu styles. The Khayal was later on further embellished by Sultan Husain Shah of Jaunpur (1458-79).

Indian music took a complexion as a result of the contact with the Muslim culture in Northern India. The new waves did not reach the South, which, however, had marked differences with the North, even before the Upper Indian and Persian melodies mingled. The Hindustani music readily absorbed and assimilated the imported tunes and styles. The two schools exerted stimulating influences on each other and brought into being beautiful combinations and subtle novelties. The new-comers were allocated proper positions in the Indian system. Their relationships were closely

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1. Amir Khusrau's patriotic feelings for India may be regarded from the following remarks of his: "They (i.e. the Persians and Khurasanis) call Hindu black, and that is true enough, yet it is the largest country in the world. You should look on Hindustan as Paradise, with which it is infact connected, for, if not, why did Adam and the peacock come to adorn it from that blissful spot?" Vide Elliot & Dowson, Vol.III, p.557. The author of the Tajziyat-ul-Amsar, Abdullah Wassaf, a contemporary of Khusrau, though not of India, also refers to this country in a most flattering term : "If it is asserted that Paradise is in India, be not surprised because Paradise itself is not comparable to it." Quoted in Elliot & Dowson, Vol.III, p.29.

studied to obtain a scientific classification with reference to affinities. Various techniques were tried and blended, enlarging the sphere of Indian music.

Prominent among the pioneers of this musical experiment was Amir Khusrau. He was adept in the Persian ragas. His fine musical sensibilities, his open mind and his interest in the good things of India, prompted him to cultivate an intimate knowledge of the Indian music. Here is an interesting little story from the Sher -ul-Ajam by Maulana Shibli Nomani :

"Music : Amir Khusrau's versatile genius turned to this delicate and fine art too, and raised it to such a degree of excellence that he has remained unrivalled during the long period of six hundred years. Naik Gopal, who was acknowledged as a master all over India, was the famous world-renowned Ustad of his time. He had 1,200 disciples who used to carry his Simhasan i.e. throne, upon their shoulders, like palanquin-bearers. The fame of his perfection and consummate skill (in music) reached the ears of Sultan Alauddin Khalji, who called him to his court. Amir Khusrau made the submission that he would conceal himself under the imperial throne, and that Naik Gopal be commissioned to sing. Naik displayed his perfect skill in six different assemblies. On the seventh occasion, Amir Khusrau, too, came to the court, along with his disciples. Gopal, too, heard of his fame, and asked him to sing. Khusrau said,

"I am a Mughal, I have just a smattering knowledge of Hindustani songs. You please let me hear something first, and then I shall also sing a song or two." Gopal commenced to sing. Khusrau said, "I set this raga (melody) long ago, and then he rendered it himself. Gopal began another raga, Khusrau rendered that too, and said that he had rendered it long ago. In short, Amir Khusrau continued to prove every raga rendered by Gopal to be his own invention. In the end he said, 'These were all hackneyed, vulgar (am bazari) ragas. Now I shall let you hear my own special invention'. Then he started singing and Gopal became mute with astonishment."[1]

It was reserved for Amir Khusrau to compound the two music and reveal a unity of emotions in a new direction. The emperor, Akbar, too, largely contributed to unifying the life in the country on the aesthetic plane. According to the Akbar Nama, the emperor had composed over two hundred of the old Khwarizmi tunes, especially the tunes of Jalashahi, Mahamir, Karat and Nauroz, which were the delight of the young and the old. They are most of them now defunct, but the melody of Nauroz, in its Sanskrit version of Navarochika, is practised to the present day.

Sultan Jalauddin khalji (1290-96), stripped kingship of its superficiality, its outward lustre, its grandeur and its awe and attempted to spiritualise it in the broadest sense of the term. During his reign the country was visited with a severe famine. When large numbers of starving

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1. The Sher-ul-Ajam, part-II, (Lahore,1924), pp.120-21.

Hindus came into Delhi with their families, the Sultan and his nobles did all they could to help them.[1] Jalaluddin tried to apply to state-craft the moral principles laid down in the Quran. During his rule persecution in the name of religion was unknown.[2]

Jalaluddin was ardent in his belief in the utilisation of the motoric force of human emotions - sympathey and kindness - for crushing th brute in the state rebels, criminals and the ordinary people. Conscious of the efficacy of human forces in changing radically human character, he manipulated the force of human power with the conviction that his humanism towards the State rebels, criminals and others would bring about a change in them and they would feel grateful to him for his humanism. The Sultan's belief in the superiority of moral law can be illustrated from a verse which he often recited, "Evil for evil is easily returned, but he only is great who returns good for evil". The ethico-political philosophy of the Sultan upset his Khalji Amirs. But he firmly stood by his philosophy of Ahimsa.

Jalaluddin was a keen well-wisher of his subjects. He took the greatest care in sorting the right type of officials for fucntioning government and never trusted the mean and the vicious, nor vested them with power and authority. Thus attempts were made to free the institution of government from the malevolent influences of politics which he abhored from the core of his heart.

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1. Elliot & Dowson, Vol.III, p.146.

2. When yet a noble in the reign of Balban, Jalaluddin Firoz Khalji had been attacked and wounded by a Mandahar Hindu. After his accession to the throne, he was pleased to appoint his Hindu assailant as a functionary on the staff of Malik Khurram, under the designation of Vakildar (palace secretary) and with a salary of one hundred thousand jitals annually.

During the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) the theory of kingship was recast. He was a stern ruler and the first Sultan who resolutely refused to be dominated by the Ulama. He sharply reminded them of their own proper sphere and claimed to be "God's vicar in things temporal as is the priest in things spiritual." He did not put up with any interference on the part of priests in affairs of State.[1] He had no liking for the progressive and humane type of roryalty as advocated by his predecessor.

Alauddin had no learning, but he was full of ideas. His ambition was to be remembered in history. On the one hand, he wanted to dim the glory of Alexander by his own world conquest; on the other, to found a new faith greater than the one that the holy Prophet had brought.[2] The former was absurd, the latter was rank heresy. When the latter was mentioned his courtiers sat in silence.[3] When the former plan was presented, it was given a hilarious appreciation. But, here too, his most trustworthy and wise counsellors dissuaded him from the scheme of world conquest, as his Indian empire was not as yet strong enough and was bristling with treason and disaffection.[4]

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1. Elliot & Dowson, vol.III, p.183.
2. Elliot & Dowson, vol.III, p.169.
3. Alaul Mulk, the kotwal of Delhi, was the only one who could not swallow down the religious innovation of the Sultan. When asked to give his candid opinion, Alaul Mulk Warned Alauddin against discussing the Shariat, as it was the work of the Prophets and not of kings. He also made the matter plain, to him that the Shariat had to do with the divine revelation. Man's opinion and human design could not estblish it. Since the days of Adam, the religion was preached by the prophets. The kings had only ruled, they never did the work of the prophets, though some prophets had ruled. The religious work ended with "our Prophet". In this way Alaul Mulk tried to uphold the dignity of religion by depriving royalty of its meddling in religious matters. Elliot & Dowson, vol.III, pp. 169-70.
4. op. cit pp.170-71.

Though an autocrat, Alauddin's court was humming with learning. Amir Khusrau was still living. Another brilliant poet, Amir Hasan,[1] called the Sadi of India, had joined him. Sadruddin Ali, Fakhruddin Khawas, Hamiduddin Raja, Shihabuddin Sada Nashin, Abdul Hakim and Maulana Arif were some of the remarkable scholars who attended the Sultan's court. But the most famous of all was the great saint, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and his first pupil Usman, better known as Akhi Siraj.

With so many men of letters at Delhi, language was undergoing a new and rapid development. Hindu and Muslim languages were beginning to be intermingled. Both Hindus and Muslims of culture used to mix Persian and Hindi words in expressing their thoughts. Poems with Hindi words and metres were sometimes written only in Persian alphabet. Malik Muhammad of jais, for example, in the time of Humayun, wrote his Padamawat in pure Hindi as current in Oudh, while he used the Persian characters.Amir Khusrau and the writers of his time used Persian with a fair sprinkling of Hindi words. On the other hand, numerous Persian words are found in the famous Rajput Ballad — Prithviraj Rasau — written by the poet Chand Bardai. During the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, Hindi and Persian were freely mixed. A Sufi poet of Bihar, Shah Sharafuddin Ahmad Yahya

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1. Though a poet of very high order, he is chiefly remembered for his prose work, the Fawaid-ul-Fuwad, which contains the table-talks of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya spread over a number of years. This book is highly regarded in the intellectual circles of the Sufis of all schools.

Maneri, wrote a poem Kajmudra, which is full of Hindi words.[1] By the time of Sikandar Lodi the mixed language, Urdu, had developed considerably. It became a highly suitable vehicle for the new thoughts that were stirring the Hindu-Muslim world of a new India.

The vast majority of the population of Northern India was Hindi-speaking. Hindi had many dialects of which Braja Bhasha, or the dialect spoken in the country around Mathura, used to be the medium of literature. The comparatively few Muslim new-comers adopted the language of the country. Some minor changes were no doubt wrought in the course of evolving the new form of language known as Urdu, which, in fact, was nothing but Muslim. To quote from the address delivered by Nawab Mirza Yar Jung Bahadur at the annual Convocation of the Aligarh Muslim University:

"The same language when written in Persian characters is called Urdu, and when written in Nagri characters, Hindi. It is quite natural that the words of Persian and Arabic origin came to predominate in Urdu, while those of Sanskrit and Bhasha predominated in Hindi. But the same verbs, pronouns and many nouns remained as the common foundation. Thus Hindustani is a language spoken generally in the North where it appears

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1. The following are also examples of his Hindi compositions :

(a) Sharafa gor darawani nis andhiyari rat,
Wan na koi puchhe ki kon tohari zat.

(b) Jeh kutta dar dar phire dar dar dur dur hoi,
Ek hi dar ko tham le dur dur kahe na koi.

(c) Sharfa dar dar keon phire chit man kare udas,
Sain basen sarir mein jeon phulan mein bas.

(Substance : (a) The grave is a lonely place full of darkness. It has no regard for one's pedigree. Virtuous deeds alone can help you to sleep in it soundly.

(b) A street dog is turned out from every door. Only that one, who has attached itself to one master, is looked after.

(c) Do not wander about in search of God; He is within you.

sometimes in the garb of Urdu and sometimes in that of Hindi. You will thus see that the very cause of its birth was a desire to have a common language for India. Hindustani is not the language of any Islamic country."

The mixed Urdu dialect was adopted by the Muslim soldiers of the Punjab. But it remained a spoken dialect long before it could be used in literature. When after Malik Kafur's invasion of the Deccan, Punjabi Musalmans came to settle in the South, they brought with them their Northern dialect. The conquering Muslims, finding themselves in a country of strange vocabulary, set to developing their own language which they regarded as the language of the exalted camp — Zaban-i-Urdu-i Mualla — as distinguished from the languages of this South Indian subjects. By the end of the 16th century, in the Qutb Shahi State of Golkunda, Ibu Nishati set the first literary standard. His two books, Tutinama and Phulban, show this early Deccani style. The example of the South was emulated by the Northern Muslim poets. Urdu poetry came to be written on the basis of Hindi; the metre and words of higher culture alone were borrowed from Persian. Masterpieces of Urdu poetry are very recent productions.

Intermingling of blood, too, had started early. A notable example was the marriage of the eldest son of Sultan Alauddin Khalji to Deval Rani, daughter of the Raja of Anhilwara. The romance o this marriage has been celebrated in the famous poem, Deval Rani Khizr Khan by Amir

Khusrau, who says that an autographed memoir of the Prince himself is the basis of this poetry of love and bliss.

Sultan Ghiyasuddin (1320-25), founder of the Tughluq dynasty, was kind and generous by nature. Sobriety was one of his characteristics. He was moral than religious in his outlook and mode of life. He had at heart the welfare of the people. He was a prototype of Jalaluddin Khalji. The despotic kingship he abhorred to establish, as it did more harm than good to the people. To him kingship signified an active but benevolent power. Justice and beneficence were the watchwords of his kingship. In matters of government he stuck to the principle of moderation and refrained from all kinds of excesses. He believed in the political maxim that the office of kingship is a joint responsibility. Success in the affairs of state-craft depended more on its consultative and deliberative aspect than on the sole initiative of kingship. Having such ideas in view, he studied laws and rules of governments. Before enforcement of laws for the stability of the State and regulating the affairs of the people he discussed and deliberated with the best responsible heads.

Ghiyasuddin Tughluq's conception of kingship was not a reasoned-out product of his mind. The ideal of kingship was soul-inspiring for him. By instinct and temperament he believed in the institution of kingship. It appeared to him as human and needed life-promoting forces to enliven it. Kingship could only thrive and survive on human sentiment and affection.

The kingship of Ghiyasuddin was Permeated with progressive ideas. It rejected nepotism as a principle in statecraft and introduced a new principle of qualified skill and technical knowledge for all offices, high or low, of the government. The condition for appointments was qualification. In actual practice offices were filled in the light of the qualification-prnciple, which, according to historians, was carried out with such a disciplinary force and strictness that the services of the able and the deserved were requisitioned and no unemployment was found among them.

The economic policy of the state was also guided by principles of moderation and foresight. Though in the realisation of state-dues strictness and severity were observed, the State protected the people and the workingclass of the poor from the high-handedness of the officials and the exploitation of the rich. Measures were also adopted to relieve the people of their suffering and privation.

Sultan Ghiyasuddin was succeeded by his son Muhammad bin Tughluq. Sultan Muhammad was a thinker of high order,[1] who was pathetically dogged by failure all his life. Because of his failure, many historians have failed to appraise the lofty qualities of his head and heart correctly. Wisdom cannot always be judged by result, and his undertakings, undoubtedly, brought misery to his people. Yet this philosopher monarch never purposely wronged them.

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1. Elliot & Dowson, vol.III, p.236.

He planned to transfer his capital from Delhi to Devagiri for very good reasons. The Southern and the Western portions of his empire, where his hold was comparatively weak, were very far from the imperial city of Delhi. Devagiri was far better suited and might have proved to be a more efficient centre of control than Delhi. The inhabitants of Delhi were given all facilities for migration. Good roads had been constructed. Along the roads had been planted avenues of shady trees and excellent rest houses. Liberal compensation was given to the people so that they might not incurany loss. Handsome prices were offered for houses at the old capital while land was freely given at Davagiri for building new ones. Many nobles were provided with free quarters of suitable size and style. Yet the plan of transfer failed miserably and the people suffered untold misery.

His scheme of special taxation of the people of the Doab proved to be another mishap. The land of the Doab was exceedingly fertile and well able to bear heavier taxation. The scheme was by no means unreasonable. But unfortunately, while it was put into force, famine visited the region. The men on the spot, wanting to make some money for themselves, did not report the true conditions to the Sultan. Or else the scheme would have been withdrawn. Nothing was done and the people had to suffer unspeakable woe.

It may be mentioned by the way that this Sultan conferred an

important position in the finance department on a Hindu, named Ratan. Though the monarch at first employed foreign Muslim nobles, later in his reign he recruited his officers from the rank and file of the Indians, both Muslim and Hindu. Among the distinguished Hindus at his court were included Raja Sekhara, Bhima, Mantri Bhanaka Bhattaraka Simha Kirti, Somaprabha Suri etc.[1] He used also to give away rich robes and bangles of gold to Hindus who would agree to accept Islam.

Spurred by failure, the Sultan proceeded to try one audacious plan after another. His scheme of the conquest of Tibet was one such. It met with as heavy a disaster as the proposed migration to Devagiri.

The Sultan's desire to remodel his currency proved another failure. But in this case the people had not to suffer. For, as soon as he learnt of the people's reluctance to accept the token currency, he ordered the new coins to be immediately replaced by old ones. Surely, he could never do this, if the royal treasury was empty, as Barani says it was.[2]

True, the Sultan was very severe, he is said to have been vindictive. But he never punished for nothing, though his punishments were sometimes out of proportion to the offences. He set before himself a very high ideal of justice. He had no thought of sparing himself. Not only Muslims but also his Hindu subjects could drag him into the court of justice, if they felt aggrieved in any way.[3]

Sultan Muhammad was the most learned Muslim ruler that ever sat on

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1. C.B. Seth's Jainism in Gujarat, p.181, Proceedings of Indian History Congress (1941), pp.301-302.

2. Elliot & Dowson, vol.III, p.237.

3. The Rehla (edited by A.M. Husain), p.83.

the throne of Delhi. Moreover, he had a keen critical faculty and consequently had but little respect for the Ulama. A mind so constituted, naturally inclined towards reforms. He tried his hands at reforming both politics and religion. Even in the religious affairs of Hindus, he sought to introduce some reform. He was the fore-runner of Akbar in attempting to suppress the forced practices of the Sati rite.

A reference has been made to Alauddin's eldest son marrying a Hindu princess. Sultan Firoz Tughluq was an issue of a Hindu mother. His father, Rajab, was the commander-in-chief of Alauddin Khalji. His mother was the daughter of Rana Mall Bhatti of Abohar in the Punjab. When Abohar was besieged and the Rana and his people were threatened with destruction, his daughter offered herself as the ransom for the freedom of her father and the safety of her people.[1] –

Firoz Tughluq had first refused to accept the crown. But he was persuaded by the nobles of the imperial court to assume royal responsibility. He prayed to God for endowing him with the true qualities of a ruler and then ascended the throne.

The mottos of his government, which ran to the following effect, were announced, and also inscribed on the portico of the royal palace at Firoz Kotla :

"Mercy, kindness, forbearance and grace are the guiding principles of my government and my motto is :

Dil-i-dostan jam bihtar ki ganj?
Khazina tahi bih ki mardum ba ranj?

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1. Afif, pp.36-39.

(Substance : The welfare of the people in better than accumulating treasure for the coffer. It is better to have an empty chest than have the people downcast).

"The preceding Sultans had their motto the following :

Mulk ra barqarar mi khwahi,
Tegh ra bi qaurar khwahi dasht.

(Substance : If you want to maintain the stability of your kingdom, then keep the sword action).

"But I say that stability comes through the grace of God :

Karam kun chu dast-i-tu bala tar ast,
Ki bakhshais az khashm wala tar ast.

(Substance : Show mercy when you have the power, since forgiveness is nobler than punishment).

Tura chun zi Bari buzurgi atast,
Ba tajil rasm-i-siyasat khatast.

(Substance : While God has granted you greatness, it is wrong to inflict punishment rashly).

Gar awwal tawaqquf kuni dar qisas,
Tuwan kusht ura ki ba dihi khalas.

(Substance : If punishment is delayed at the outset, you can kill him whom you had left unpunished).

Wa lekin chu qalib paragandah gasht,

Na yarad ba farman-i-tu zindah gasht.

(Substance : When the body is disintegrated, your orders cannot bring it back to life).

Nigah kun gahi madari mihr sanj,

Ba an tifl-i-khud chand burd ast ranj.

(Substance : Keep in mind the affectionate mother who has borne so many hardships for that child of hers)".[1]

Firoz Shah gradually restored to supremacy the Ulama who had been pushed to corner by the learned Muhammad bin Tughluq. Before his time, Hindus and Muslim, men and women, used to visit festivals at temples. The practice was now forbidden by royal orders.[2]

Though he had no patience with the Hindu's religion, Firoz Shah was able to appreciate other aspects of Hindu culture. When Nagarkot was sacked, it came to his notice that there was a library there. It was found to contain one thousand three hundred Sanskrit books. He ordered that some learned pundits should be sent there forthwith for translating some of those books. He made a selection and ordered Maulana Izzuddin Khalid Khani to translate a book on Hindu philosophy and omens. Another Muslim scholar was asked to work on a book on veterinary scinece.[3]

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1. The Futuhat-i-Firoz Shahi, pp.3-6.
2. Afif, pp.36-39.
3. Badauni (English Translation), vol.I, p.332.

Collaboration between pundits and maulavis in the translation department shows that learned men on both sides had begun to study each other's language and literature. It may be remembered in passing that during this reign lived the famous poet philosopher Jalaluddin Rumi and the noted chroniclers Ziyauddin Barani and Shams Siraj Afif.

Even more than Hindu books, Sultan Firoz loved Hindu architecture. Tremendous was the solicitude with which he arranged the removal of one of the pillars of Asoka. Not less than ninety kos away from Delhi was a place named Khizrabad. Here was found a massive pillar of Asoka embodying his mandates to his people. A troop of imperial soldiers were sent to the spot, carrying various implements. They were joined by a large number of local people armed with tools. The earth surrounding the pillar was dug out. Lest the pillar should break by dropping on hard soil, ample quantity of silk cotton was deposited all around it to prepare a downy bed for it to fall upon. The pillar itself from top to bottom was tenderly covered on all sides with raw skins and reeds. Then a carriage with forty-two wheels was especially made ready to carry it to the bank of the Jamuna. Thousands of people gathered, and hundreds drew it by rope to the bank of the river. There on river were waiting a cluster of large boats. We are told, some of them were big enough to bear the weight of seven thousand maunds. Skilfully shifted from the cart to the boats, the colossal colummn was punted carefully up to the capital city.

There at Firoz Kotla a structure for its installation was fittingly prepared. Many Brahmans and wise men of the Hindus were invited. They were asked, if they could decipher the inscriptions on the pillar. But it was more than they could do.[1]

Firoz Shah was absolutely sincere in his prayer to God that he might be given the strength to shoulder the responsibility of kingship. Every class and community shared in the general prosperity of his reign. A pretty long list of his achievements have been furnished by Firishta. It is needless to enumerate them here. Suffice it to say that they include much works of utility as hospitals, inns, bridges, wells and canal of irrigation as well as numerous gardens and pleasure houses.[2] Last, though not the least, Firoz Shah remitted the huge State Loan amounting to two crore tankas that had been advanced to the people by the previous Sultan.[3]

It is for these reasons that Firoz Shah is regarded as the most benevolent ruler before Akbar the Great.

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1. Elliot & Dowson, Vol.III, p. 350.
2. Briggs, Vol.I, p.270.
3. Afif, p.92.

CHAPTER - FOUR

STATE AND RELIGION

The Muslim conquest of Persia had proved to be a turning point in Arabian political ideal. The view of the ancient and magnificent pageant of Persian imperialism overwhelmed the simple followers of Islam. The Sultans of Ghazna, whose influence on Indian polity became dominant, greedily copied the Persian pattern. And the Muslim rulers of India had a far larger scope for displsy. The Quranic outlook was changing fast. The creed of earthly power was established. Gone was the election of Caliphs, and bloodshed for[1] the throne became too common. Drink, like the Nauroz festival, was imported into kingly rite. Power politics generally got the better of the divine principles. The ideal of Jihad was twisted for the purpose of aggression. In matters of State, religion had become a name and the name was used for secular ends.

Religion was not a direct motive of the Muslim conquest of India. Those who conquered it were not preachers of Islam. They were a martial people, who ravaged not only India but Muslim countries also. The Turkish Sultanate of Delhi, having begun as a military occupation, the Sultan had to appease his soldiers. It was also necessary to be at peace with the Ulama, who surrounded the throne and held the ear of the Sultan. Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246-66) of, the Slave dynasty was the first to

attempt the building up of a government based upon the welfare and goodwill of the people. He did not encourage fantastic renderings of the holy law, but drew a distinction between the two types of Ulama, religious and worldly. Rulers with learning, like Muhammad bin Tughluq, or with love of absolute power, like Alauddin Khalji, treated the Ulama with scant courtesy.

All the theologians were not reactionary. Some of them had inhrerited the tolerant spirit of the early Arabian sages. They frankly admonished rulers who sought to bend the humane laws of the Shariat to their personal caprice or avarice. The following incident recorded in the Tarikh-i-Daudi is instructive :

"Sultan Sikandar Dodi asked Malik-ul-Ulama, Miyan Abdullah, what to do with the Hindus at Karkhet. He inquired about the custom of previous kings. The Sultan replied that up to his time they had left the Hindus unmolested. The Malik-ul-Ulama then assured the Sultan that it would be very improper for him to destroy an ancient idol-temple, and that he ought not to forbid the accustomed rite of permitting their bathing in the tank, which they regarded as holy. When this conversation had lasted a short time, the Sultan placed his hand on his dagger and exclaimed : 'You side with the infidels, I shall first put an end to you and then massacre the infidels at Karkhet.' Miyan Abdullah calmly said : '.......When you asked me, I gave you an answer in conformity with the precepts of the

holy Prophet. If you have no reverence for them, what is the use of inquiring?' Sikandar's wrath was slightly appeased, and he said: 'If you had permitted me to do this, many thousands of Muslims would have been placed in easy circumstances by it.' Miyan Abdullahsaid: 'I have said my say; you know what you intend doing'.[1]

Likewise, the Sultans were not all of one mind on the issue of religious domination. There were exceptions amongst them, like the noble Miyan Abdullah referred to above. They did not subscribed to the view that attacking the religion of the Hindus would make their hold on India strong and stable. The promptings of religious exclusiveness and the ideals of a composite nationhood were often in conflict. Of the two motives, that of religion was on the whole in possession of the field; still the conception of rulership on a broader basis was rapidly gaining ground. In comparison with contemporary Europe, the Sultans of Delhi were positively more humane. A Sultan like Sikandar Lodi might take recourse to religious intolerance. But contemporary Europe was governing by means of the Inquisition, stifling all independent thinking with a brutality too horrible to think of to-day. There the Church and the State were in unholy alliance. Men and women and books showing the slightest signs of freedom of thought were burnt, beheaded and battered to death. In India, on the other hand, most of the Sultans tried to act in accordance with the principle of accomodating religions and interests with a view to knit

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1. Tarikh-i-Daudi, pp. 29-30.

various people into a common national fabric, as was done by the Prophet on his arrival at Madina. The success in this direction rose to its record height in the reign of Akbar.

The Arab administrators in Sindh had left the people free to practise their own religious beliefs. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna cared little for propagating the faith of Islam. He was moved chiefly by military ambition and love of money and mundane glory. One of his chief generals was Tilak, a Hindu, whom he employed to suppress the rebellion of his Muslim subjects.[1] The founder of the Muslim empire in India, Muhammad Ghori, made friends with tho Raja of Jammu against Khusrau Malik, the last of the Ghaznavids, of Lahore. It is curious also that he had his coins stamped with a Hindu legend.

With the passing away of the Ghori Sultan and with the establishment of the Turkish kingdom of Delhi, Muslim interests in India were localised and the foreign touch vanished from the Sultanate. India because the Sultans' whole concern. She became their motherland. By the end of the 14th century, masses of Indian Muslims were settling down to live with the Hindus in good neighbourliness, and both sides began to work at bringing about an atmosphere of concord.

Consciously or sub-consciously, in response to the popular urge, the nature of the Sultanate slowly underwent a great change. The invader and conqueror was transformed into the benevolent protector and impartial

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1. Elliot & Dowson, Vol.II p.132.

dispenser of justice. Sultan Balban gave to Prince Muhammd the martyr this sage counsel that the State should be built securely on the following seven pillars : the authority of the monarch, the reputation of the ruler, justice to the subjects, solvency of the royal treasury, solvency of the cultivators, general welfare of the people and competence of the royal officials.[1] No wonder that this wise Sultan is mentioned in a Sanskrit inscription. It lavishes abundant praise on Balban in high-flown Sanskrit. His domination is said to stretch from the Bay of Bengal to Ghazna and to extend down to Cape Comorin. The eulogy is sung in the loftiest strain of classical exaggeration; "......He, the bewildering dust raised by the hoofs of whose cavalry marching in front of his army, overthrew his enemies in front..... even he, the lord of the seven sea-girt land, Sri Hammira Ghiyasadina, the king and emperor, reigns supreme.

"When he issued forth on a military expedition, the Gaudas abdicated their glory; the Andhras, through fear, besought the shelter of the caves; the Keralas forsook their pleasures; the Karnatakas hid themselves in defiles; the Maharastras gave up their places; the Gurjaras resigned their vigour; the Latas dwarfed themselves into Kiratas.

"The earth now being supported by this sovereign, Shesha, altogether forsaking his duty of supporting the weight of the globe, has betaken himself to the great bed of Vishnu (the ocean), and Vishnu himself, taking Lakshami on his breast, and relinquishing all thought of

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1. Elliot & Dowson, Vol.II, p.132.

protection, sleeps in peace on the ocean of milk."[1]

The growing harmony of Hindus and Muslims in India was disliked by the Muslims beyond the Himalayas. They considered their Indian co-religionists as having fallen from the pure Islamic standard. It was about this time that there was a retrograde movement in Central Asia. Doctors of Islamic Law began to misread the words of the Quran and of the holy Prophet. They began to talk of Jihad in a manner unknown to the glorious days of the past. The teaching of tolerance, that lay deep in the message of the holy Prophet, was purposely ignored. As a devout Muslim, Timur swallowed this new version of Islam. He had noticed the general toleration of Hinduism in India with disapproval. When he marched out on a Jihad, his very first attack was directed against the Muslim ruler of Delhi. It is full of deep significance that he spoke of Indian Muslim as "those who called themselves Muslims but had strayed from the Muslim fold." The opinion of Timur should be enough to bear out the truth that by his time the Muslims of India had already taken largely to Indian ways of life.

Of course, the sense of common nationalism had not yet arisen. The antagonism between the ruler and the ruled persisted some time and the Hindus had now andthen to suffer persecution for their faith. Yet, in spite of all unfavourable circumstances, the rulers of Muslim India did not take much time to realise that India alone belonged to them and they belonged to India. They were conscious of being the ruling community and, in order

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1. The Boher inscription of 1281 A.D. —— Rajendra Lal Mitra's Translation, J.R.A.S.B., Vol-I, 1935.

to maintain the position, they reiterated on occasions the difference of religion. Yet, religion for the sake of religion was seldom an active factor. When religious difference was stressed, it was merely for political reasons.

RELIGION AND THE PEOPLE

We have noticed already Miyan Abdullah pleading before Sultan Sikandar Lodi for toleration of faith. Indeed, a spirit of toleration was in the air. Throughout the North there was gradually spreading an atmosphere of freindliness between man and man through the influence of the Sufis. The pure life and the mystic faith of the Darweshes touched the heart of emperors, nobles and country folk, all alike. Hence in contemporary paintings the Darwesh living in lonely caves was a favourite subject. Likewise, the Darwesh surrounded by fierce animals or the Darwesh dancing in joy of mystic communion[1] was pained again and again by the inspired artists of the day.

Sultans and nobles were not seldom found straying far from the scenes of their pomp and power to the peaceful retreats of Faqirs and Sadhus and there humbly and devoutly listening to their counsels and maxims. The instance of Emperor Jahangir, though apparently beyond the

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1. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi founded the Order of "dancing darweshes."

scope of our study, eloquently proves the point. Jahangir's frequent visits to the Hindu Yogi, Gosain Jadrup, are recorded in his autography. We are quoting below at length from his Memoirs to convey the vivid impression of what the saints were to the life of Hindustan in the middle ages. The emperor says in his Memoris:

"I embarked in a boat and hastened to meet him (i.e. Gosain Jadrup), and at the close of the day I ran and enjoyed his society in the retirement of his cell. I heard many sublime words of religious duties, of knowledge of divine things. Without immoderate praise, he sets forth clearly the doctrines of wholesome Sufism, and one can find delight in his society." [1]

Again:

"In the foregoing pages, something has been written about Gosain Jadrup who lived as a hermit in Ujjain. At this time he changed his residence to Mathura, which is one of the greatest places of worship of the Hindus, and employed himself in the worship of the true God on the bank of the Jamuna." [2]

Then again:

"On Monday, the 12th, my desire to see the Gosain Jadrup again increased and, hastening to his hut, without ceremony, I enjoyed his society. Sublime words were spoken between us. God Almighty has granted him an unusual grace, a lofty understanding, an exalted culture, and sharp

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1. Rogers & Beveridge, Vol.II, p.52.
2. Ibid., Vol.II, p.104.

intellectual powers, with a God-given knowledge and a heart free from the attachments of the world and all that is in it; he sits content in the corner of solitude and without wants. He has chosen of wordly goods half a gaz of old cotton (kirpas) like a woman's veil, and a piece of earthware from which to drink water, and in winter and summer and the rainy season lives naked and with his head and feet bare. He has made a hole in which he can turn round with a hundred difficulties and tortures, with a passage such that a suckling could hardly be put through it."[1]

Already before the great Mughals, the country under the Sultans of Delhi was favourable to the growth of goodwill. A number of religious reformers appeared on the scene and contributed to the spiritual upliftment of the people at large. These great souls possessed certain distinctive charateristics in common. They were non-sectarian in the sense that they were not affiliated to, or at least were not leading separate religious sects of their own. They were free from the bondage of any particular creed and had no blind faith in any sacred scriptures; they attained illumination by individual exertion through freedom of thought and self-culture. They did not observe any rituals or ceremonies, nor followed any dogma, and most of them severely denouced idolatry. They condemned polytheism, believed in One God, and, what is more important, realised the unity of God invoked by various religious sects under different names, such as Allah, krishna and Ram etc. They believed in bhakti as the only means of

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1. Rogers & Beveridge, Vol.II, p.105.

salvation and gave a very comprehensive interpretation and profoundly psychological analysis of the conception of bhakti. This may be said to be their chief and permanent contribution to the religious thoughts of India. With them bhakti meant single-minded, uniterrupted and extreme devotion to God without any selfish motive, growing gradually into an intense love. They preached bhakti through simple aphorisms, parables and maxims which brought home to even ordinary and uneducated persons the universal truths which were considered more valuable than sectarian doctrines or scriptural texts. As a rule they preached through vernaculars, for they wanted to uplift the masses. The same noble object led them to do away with the invidious distinctions of caste and bestow special care and attention upon the degraded and depressed classes.

The greatest of these great souls was Kabir who believed himself to be at once the child of Allah and Ram. Quite naturally to him, as he said," Mecca has verily become Kashi and Ram has become Rahim." He was steeped in Sufi lore, though he had his initiation from his Guru, the Brahman saint, Ramananda. Sheikh Taqi Suhrawardy and Sheikh Bhika Chishti were amongst his masters. His message to the two communities about the underlying unity of their faith and ideals was as vitally necessary in his own times as it is in ours. Kabir says:

"The difference among faiths is only due to difference in names; everywhere there is the yearning for the same God. Why do the Hindus and

Muslims quarrel for nothing ? Keep at a distance all pride and vanity, insincerity and falsehood; consider others the same as yourself, let your heart be filled with love and devotion. Then alone will your struggle be successful."

Kabir's teachings offended both Hindu and Muslim priests, and they gave him bitter opposition. Finally, the aid of the State was sought to persecute the saint. Sikandar Lodi was convinced of the sincerity of the reformer, of his real solicitude for peace, and contrived to get him out of the clutches of the opposition by a temporary exile. Not long afterwards he returned to Benares, and now Hindus and Muslims, in large numbers, began to listen to his message.

Kabir was not in favour of renouncing the world and going to hills or forests in search of salvation; instead, he advised his followers to earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow and perform all the duties as householders, while leading a noble, honest and dedicated life. He himself lived as a householder and did not take to spectacular asceticism. He Married a girl, Loi, whom he picked up from the hermitage of a recluse living on the bank of the Ganges, and became the father of a son and a daughter, who were named Kamal and Kamali respectively. He did not forsake his profession, that of a weaver. He would work on the loom, while talking to his enquirers and followers. The loom gave him living and formed the background of his teaching, a teaching of the

simplest spiritual mechanism, and where an atmosphere of humble life prevailed.

The entry of Kabir into the fold of the bhakti movement proved most fruitful in bringing about reconciliation between the Hindus and Muslims. With filial attachment to both the religious communities, Kabir was free from fanaticism. He rubbed shoulders with bhakti reformers as well as Sufi saints. Though intensely religious in outlook, he was not a slave of either Hinduism or Islam. He was a man of absolutely independent thoughts and boldly criticised the emphasis on external aspects of both the religions. He denounced the pundits and mullas alike, and took them to task for their orthodox and exploitative attitude. He raised his voice against the custom of sati and child marriage, the two evils commonly practised by the Hindus.

Kabir's contempt of convention and his strong belief that pure life alone has the supreme holy sanction are proved by his actions of which the last is perhaps the best example. At the approach of the end of his life he ceremoniously left Benares in favour of Maghar, a place in the neighbourhood, invested by superstition with extreme notoriety. People fear that one dying at this place is reborn as an ass, whereas death in Benares is rewarded with a passage to paradise. Kabir successfully attacked this myth. For, when he died, and while his devotees of both communities were wrangling over different methods of disposing of the body, lo ! it was

revealed, on the withdrawal of the shroud over the corpse, that only a bunch of flowering lotus was there. The other and more significant fact is that both communities claimed him as their very own.

Kabir's teachings were in perfect harmony with the social and religious needs of the times; he identified himself completely with the concept of an integrated Indian society and won the hearts of millions. His dohas and popular sayings of revolutionary social import are widely known and have become a part and parcel of medieval cultural heritage.

About this time Guru Nanak was also preaching his mission of unity between the two communities. His conception of God's government[11] was that "The Hindu and Muslim saints are the diwans in attendance upon the Preserver." Like Kabir, he too was largely influenced by Sufi saints and Sufic lore. Like Kabir again, he stood boldly against outward forms that were deadening the spiritual life of both peoples. He argues with the Hindu:

"Ganges water, firewood of the Karanta tree,
Eating rice in boiled milk,
O my soul ! these are of no account,
Until thou art saturated with the True name."

To the Muslim he says:

"Make right conduct thy Kabah, truth thy spiritual guide, good works thy creed and thy prayer,
The will of God thy rosary, and God will preserve thine honour, O Nanak."

Guru Nanak's teachings were in full conformity with all the positive tenents of the bhakti movement, with the additional credit that, like Kabir, he also advocated householder's life for his devotees; this revolutionary concept was taken by him to the logical conclusion when he emphasized that it was possible and also desirable for the men of God, on their way to the attainement of salvation, to live as honest bread-earners and householders, just as a lotus flower survives untained in the midst of muddy water. He introduced community lunch (i.e. langer) as a practical step to eradicate the evils of caste discrimination and untouchability from among his followers.

Many other founders of new orders followed the same path leading to a common faith of love and devotion and the rejection of conventions. The sage, Dadu Dayal (d.1603), who is reported to have had an interview with Emperor Akbar, speaking of the One and indivisible God says :

"Thou art Ram and Rahim,

Thou art the beautiful malik (master),

Thy names are Keshava and Karim."

He says with deep persuasion :

"The two brothers are hands and feet, the two are the two ears, the two brothers are the two eyes —— Hindus and Muslims."

Few of these medieval saints were high-brow philosophers. Chaitanya alone of them was a savant, but his greatness was the result of his impassioned

loved of God and not of his scholarship. Academic proficiency is seldom the gift that is required in an attempt at rejuvenating a nation. What is needed first and foremost is a creative mind, deep intuition and long vision. One who has done a vast deal of uplifting work in the middle ages gives the following account of himself :

"My caste is low, my actions are low, and even my profession is low, Says Raidas, yet the Lord has raised me high."

Not by application of intellect but by the concentration of love that the point of view of another can be visualised. As Iqbal says :

"The heart is a kind of inner intuition or insight, which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us in contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense perception."[1]

The bhakti movement achieved its declared objectives to a considerable extent. It struck a serious blow at the predominance of the Brahman priesthood in the Hindu society; the ground lost by the Brahmans in Hindu religion could never be regained by them thereafter. The citadel of caste system could not be broken altogether, even then its evil effects were minimised by the development of harmonious relationships and free social intercourse between the high-caste and low-caste Hindus. The numerous social evils from which the Hindus suffered could not be eradicated completely, nevertheless, when thoroughly exposed and condemned, they tended to subside and take the hind seat in the moral

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1. Quoted by K.G. Saiyidain in Iqbal's Educational Philosophy, p., 108.

conscience of the people. The bhakti movement laid stress on the finer values of life and thereby improved the general moral tone of the society as a whole. The bhakti reformers and the Sufis, individually as well as collectively, helped in the creation of an atmosphere of brotherhood and fellow-feeling between the Hindus and Muslims.

So far we have concerned ourselves with the contributions of the bhakti reformers. It will be in the fitness of our study, if a brief mention is also made of the Sufi saints' contribution to the Indo-Muslim culture.

The mystical side of Islam is called Sufism or tasawwuf. It is variously defined by various writers. Some define it as the purification of thought; others as the acceptance of Truth and renunciation of everything other than God. All, however, agree that Sufism constitutes a system of doctrines and practices which aims at the direct communion of the self with Ultimate Reality (i.e. God). It is built on the principle that ordinary means of knowledge through observation, experimentation, verification and generalisation enable us to know what is only relative and not the Absolute. As God is Absolute, we can not know anything about His qualities except through intuition or revelation. Intuition gives man a simpler and more direct and more adequate knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

Sufism had its origin in the likes of the Prophet and his companions. The Prophet's devotion to and trust in God, his resignation to Divine Will, his piety, contentment, austerse mode of living and abhorence of wealth,

form the corner-stone of Sufism. It is a well-known fact that even at the close of his life, when he had practically dominated the whole of Arabia, the Prophet and the members of his family never had their fill at the meals, and never amassed wealth.

The advent of Sufis to the sub-continent dates back to the Arab conquest of Sindh. The Arabs were successfully contained in Sindh and Multan by the resistance put up by the Rajput chiefs of Northern, Central and Western India, individually and collectively, for more than three hundred years, but during this very period, the Sufis penetrated into different parts of the country unhindered.

The first great Sufi who came to India and settled at Lahore was Sheikh Abul Hasan Ali Hujwiri, popularly known as Data Ganjbakhsh. He died in 1073 at Lahore, and his mausoleum has ever since remained a place of pilgrimage for all.

After the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate a stream of Sufis from different parts of Iran and Central Asia, began to immigrate to this sub-continent. They moved about in the robes and style of the Indian Sadhus and established their hermitages at a number of places. They set up their abode in the residential quarters or colonies of the low-castes on the periphery of the Hindu towns. Their main object was to persuade the down-trodden sections of the Hindu population to embrace Islam on merit. The Sultanate of Delhi was confined to only a part of the country for most of

the times, but the Sufis spread themselves throughout India and carried on peaceful propaganda of Islam.

The Sufis practised austerities and laid stress on complete surrender to the Will of God. They stood for self-purification and complete absorption in God, which could not be secured by self-endeavour. They felt that the purity of heart was far greater than rituals and ceremonials, and that it was the only way by which Truth could be realised. According to one version, a Sufi had to pass through ten stages of dedication to God, before he could attain communion with Him. These were: Taubah (or Repentance), Wara (or Abstinence), Zuhd (or Piety), Faqr (or Poverty), Sabr (or Patience), Shukr (or Gratitude), Khauf (or Fear), Raja (or Hope), Tawakkul (or Contentment) and Riza (or Submission to Divine Will].[1]

Like the bhakti reformers, most of the Sufis renounced the materialistic pursuits of the world; this was called Tark-i-Dunya, which Prof. K.A. Nizami explains thus: "The general impression that Tark-i-Dunya meant adopting an hermit's attitude towards life and severing all earthly connections is not confirmed by contemporary mystic records. In fact, it was not the world as such which the mystics rejected but the materialistic approach towards life and its problems which they hated and despised. The more a man got involved in materialistic pursuits, the farther he drifted from the spiritual objectives."[2]

Some of the Sufi saints observed celibacy, while others married and

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1. Awarif al-Maarif (Urdu Translation) pp.600-23.
2. Religion and Politics, p.237.

lived as ordinary householders. They mostly depended on futuh or unasked for gifts, though some of them took up cultivation of waste land as the means of their livelihood. It was never their intention to create a class of parasites on the society. Usually the Sufis avoided government patronage; very few of them accepted government grants in land and money and lived in affluence.

The Sufis were divided into a number of Silsilas or Orders. Only two of these took deep roots in the Indian soil; these were the Chishti and Suhrawardy Orders. The Suhrawardy Silsila made its appearance first in Sindh and North-Western India, where its influence was considerable. The Chishti Order became most prominent throughout the length and breadth of India.

The Chishti Silsila was introduced into India by Khawaja Muinuddin. He was born in Sijistan in Cir.1141. Having lost his father in his childhood, he turned an ascetic and wandered about in the Muslim countries until he was initiated into the Chishti Order by Khwaja Usman at Nishapur. In the prime of his youth, Muinuddin came to Lahore, spent some time there at the mausoleum of Data Ganjbakhsh, and then shifted to Ajmer and set up his abode at the outskirts of the town for the propagation of Islam among the poor Hindus. The Khwaja's spiritual guide, Sheikh Osman Harooni, had once advised him thus: "When you have put on the garment of Darweshes, behave like them." "How, Sir", asked the obedient disciple,

"should I behave?" "Treat joy and grief alike; be patient in calamity, love the poor and despise the world", was the reply. "You should", added the master, "be liberal like the river, kind like the sun and humble like the earth. Unless you show generosity in poverty, satisfaction in hunger, joy in sorrow, and love to your enemy, you cannot be a Sufi." Sheikh Muinuddin acted faithfully on the advice of Hazrat Usman Harooni all his life, and at Ajmer he won hearts of the people around him by his selfless service and made many converts to Islam through peaceful means among the sturdy Rajputs. His mausoleum at Ajmer has since become an important centre of pilgrimage for Hindus and Muslims alike.

Sheikh Hamiduddin, one of the disciples of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, set up his hermitage in a mud-house in a village near Nagaur (Rajputana) and carried on peaceful propagation of Islam among the Rajputs. He married and lived on cultivation like an ordinary Indian villager. A vegetarian by food habit, he mixed freely with the Hindus and won their hearts and admiration by his virtuous living.

Sheikh Qutbuddin Bakhtyar Kaki, yet another disciple of khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, was an immigrant from Farghana, which, later on, became famous as the home land of Babur. He settled in Delhi during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish on the directive of Sheikh Muinuddin. He declined to accept royal patronage and preferred to live in poverty. He was so popular with the common people of Delhi that, when harassed by

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the jealous Sheik-ul-Isam, Najmuddin Kubra, he applied to Sheikh Muinuddin Chishti for permission to leave the capital and consequently Sheikh Muinuddin himself came to Delhi to take him with himself to Ajmer, the entire populace of Delhi, including Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish, followed him to a few stages and would not return until Sheikh Muinuddin agreed to leave him behind. This was the greatest miracle of Sheikh Qutbuddin Bakhtyar Kaki, and the secret of his greatness lay in the deep love he showed to all who came to his apparently humble hermitage in the outskirts of the capital.

Music, vocal and instrumental both, is considered to be of great spiritual value by the Chishti saints. Accordingly, they invited musicians and singers, Muslim and Hindu alike, to entertain the audience at their hermitages by the recitation of spiritual songs and hymns. It added to the cultural aspect of Sufism and attracted huge crowds of listeners even when they had no intention of embracing Islam. Sheikh Bakhtyar Kaki was very fond of spiritual music; once during the course of musical concert, he fell into a state of ecstasy and breathed his last (1235). He lies buried in a small mausoleum at Mehrauli in the vicinity of Qutb Minar.

Sheikh Baba Farid (1175-1265) of Ajodhan (modern Pak Patan in Pakistan) was a disciple of Sheikh Bakhtyar Kaki. He belonged to a royal family of Afghanistan.[1] His grandfather had migrated to Multan. Baba Farid led a householder's life. A brilliant orator with poetic expression, Farid

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1. The Ain-i-Akbari (Jarrett), Vol.III, p.363.

led a householder's life. A brilliant orator with poetic expression, Farid popularised the Chishti Order throughout the country. He mixed freely with the Hindu masses. His discourses and spiritual expositions went home to all the people, Hindu and Muslim alike. A fairly large number of his sayings have been incorporated inthe Adi Granth of the Sikhs.[1] Sheikh Farid's hermitge at Ajodhan was one of the great mystic centres of the age and all sorts of people — high and low, rich and poor — flocked to it to soothe their tired nerves in the cool, spiritual atmosphere that prevailed there.

Baba Farid produced a galaxy of Sufi preachers, who spread the message of Islam through mysticism in India and abroad. Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya (1235-1325) was the most brilliant of his disciples who set up his headquarters at Ghiyaspur, now known by his own name near his shrine in Delhi. He laid stress on the element of love as a means of the realisation of God. The love of God implied, in his view, the love of humanity, and this ethical idea was strongly inculcated by him on the hearts of his discipes. His deep attachment to the idea of universal love is manifest from the following utterance : "O Muslims : I swear by God that He holds dear those who love Him for the sake of human-beings, and also those who love human beings for the sake of God. This is the only way to love and adore God." He gave an Islamic touch to the socio-cultural atmosphere of the capital and won the hearts of its inhabitants by his virtuous character

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1. Harnam Singh Shan, an outstanding scholar of Sikh Studies, has identified one hundred and sixty such couplets of Baba Farid, which have been translated into Hindi and English by him. Vide So Said Shaikh Farid, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1974.

and social service to the poor and the needy. Seven Sultans sat on the throne of Delhi one after another during his life-time, but he never visited the royal court, nor did he accept royal favour. Nevertheless, most of the Turkish ruling elite and scholars, including some members of the royalty, regarded him as their Pir, or spiritual teacher. He was popularly known as Mahbub-i-Ilahi by his followers.

Of his philosophy of life, on which he acted as long as he lived, Amir Khusrau records in his Afzal-ul-Fawaid: "My master, Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya, said that the holy Prophet has enjoined on us to forgive our subordinates seventy tiems a day."

Once a stranger, armed with a big knife, entered the room of Mahbub-i-Ilahi, but was caught by his attendants. The saint urged his men not to molest him, gave him some money and asked him to leave the place. He then said to his disciples : "A Sufi's possession is a common property, and his blood unretalliated."[1]

Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya's successor at the Chishti khanqah at Delhi was Sheikh Nasiruddin Mahmud, popularly known as Chiragh-i-Dehli (1276-1356). Sheikh Nasiruddin continued with great zeal the mission of his master, showing people the way to God and bringing happiness to the hearts of men. All sorts of people —— mystics, theologians, poets, administrators, peasants and traders —— visited him and he inculcated in them in his own unassuming and quiet way, a respect for moral values and

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1. Afzal-ul-Fawaid (Urdu Translation), p.36.

a determination to face the ordeals of life bravely. His deep humanism made his heart bleed for the weak, the destitute and the down-trodden. Saiyid Jalaluddin Bokhari informs us that the Sheikh, while on his way to Thatta, met a leper who asked him for water. The Sheikh not only brought water for the leper but also drank in his bowl, while others looked with contempt at the leper and objected to the Sheikh's action.[1]

Sheikh Nasiruddin never missed an opportunity of advising his visitors. When externalists scholars visited him, he explained to them the significance of mysticism and the value of mystic practice;[2] when mystics came to him, he brought home to them the necessity of following meticulously the laws of the Shariat.[3] Once a jeweller came to his hermitage. The Sheikh advised him to be honest in his dealings.[4] One day a peasant visited him and the Sheikh expressed appreciation of his vocation, but told him to combine a spirit of religious devotion with physical labour.[5] A woman joined the discipleship of the Sheikh who told her in a message to perform prayers, and observe fast, and to deal with all men gently and politely.[6]

Sheikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Dehli was a true replica of his master in his forgiveness. One day, when he 'was alone in his closet, absorbed in meditation, a vagabond assaulted him, inflicted on his body several cuts with his sword, and thinking him to be dead, ran away. He was, however, arrested and brought before the saint. The saint prevented his disciples

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1. Cited by Prof. K.A. Nizami in his Introduction to the Khair-ul-Majalis, pp.65-66.
2. The Khair-ul-Majalis (edited by Prof. K.A. Nizami), pp.65; 210-11.
3. Ibid, pp.238-39.
4. Ibid, pp.95-96.
5. Ibid, pp.156.
6. Ibid, p.134.

from punishing the culprit, offered him a purse and sent him away, saying to his followers: "I did not like to punish him and go against the tradition of my master. It is quite possible that while assaulting me his own hand might have been hurt." The saint died of the wound he had received at the hand of his assailant.

The Suhrawardy Silsila, founded by Sheikh Najibuddin Abdul Qahir, was the second most pupular Order of the Sufis which flourished in North-Western India; its foundations on the Indian soil were laid by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan. Born near Multan in cir. 1182, Bahauddin spent many years of his youthful life in Central Asia, where he visited many important centres of Islamic learning. He was initiated into Sufism by Sheikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardy at Baghdad. He carried on his missionary work at Multan for about a quarter of a century before his death in 1262, and rose to be the most prominent Mulsim divine of his age in North-Western India.

Unlike the Chishti saints, the exponents, of the Suhraward̲y Order did not believe in excessive austerity; rather they constituted an influential and affluent Order of the Sufis. They lived comfortable family lives and felt no scruples in accepting costly presents and patronage from the Muslim aristocracy. They were thick with the ruling elite, amassed wealth and took active part in state politics.

After his death, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya was succeeded by his

son, Sharafuddin Arif, to the sajjadah (spiritual throne) of the Suhrawardy Order, while one of his disciples, Sayid Jalaluddin Sarkh Bokhri, set up his khanqah at Uchch. The Suhrawardy Silsilah was confined mostly to the upper strata of the Muslims.

IMPACT OF SUFISM ON INDIAN SOCIETY :

The Sufis acted as a great social force in moulding the character of medieval Indian society. They carried their teachings to the lowest ranks of the people and provided emotional revivalism. They comforted man when he had fallen low. They taught people disinterested virtue, purification of the soul and Divine love. They laid emphasis on the inward and not on the external side of things. It was due to this fact that their mode of training was more effective and they had a greater hold on the public than the scholastic theologians or formal jurists.

The Sufis added to the numerical strength of the Muslim population by encouraging conversions to Islam through peaceful and non-violent means. They played a great role in building the social and cultural life of the Muslims, and also set into motion the forces for their rapid Indianisation. They refined the ethical standards, built the moral character of the Muslim youth and helped them develop a healthy and rational attitude towards life. The Sufis played a significant part in the educational advancement of the society; their khanqahs became centres of knowledge and wisdom. The

The religious discourses of the Sufis helped in the intellectual and spiritual advancement of the audience, while in some khanqahs religious formal education was also imparted; some of the Sufis themselves acted as teachers.

Sufism exercised a healthy influence in bringing in bringing about reconciliation between the Muslims and the Hindus, and its direct impact on the Hindu religious thought and social life was immense. The Sufi's motto was service to humanity at large, irrespective of caste and creed; they always showed kindness to persons professing other religions. This treatment attracted the latter and also created a sense of tolerance among the Muslims. There is a tradition of the Prophet in which he says: "God has laid so much stress on the rights of a neighbour that the latter almost holds the status of a relative." Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya often referred to this tradition and then added: "The right of a neighbour, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, is that you should advance him a loan, when he required it, help him when he is in need, visit him when he is sick, comfort him when he is involved in trouble, and attend his funeral when he dies. He is not a true believer who annoys his neighbour." The sufistic definition of a half Muslim and a full Muslim is also interesting. According to the Sufi, "He is a half Muslim who is so pious that he acquires even the magical power to spread his carpet in mid-air to say his prayers, but a full Muslim is one who gets up eary in the morning, says his prayers, goes about his daily work, earn's his bread by the sweat of his brow, eats half

the bread and shares the other half with the needy and the poor. The sharing of the fruit of his labour after earning it in a righteous manner makes him a full Muslim.

This doctrine of Sulh-i-kul, or universal brotherhood had a great humanistic appeal behind it, which crossed all religious barriers, developed fellow-feeling between the two communities and electrified the process of synthesis between the ancient culture of India and the one brought by the Muslims from Arabia, Iran and Central Asia.

CHAPTER - FIVE

EMERGENCE OF INDO-MUSLIM CULTURE

The culture brought into India by the Arab, or the Turk, or later on by the Mughal, was not such as would seriously disturb the Hindu tradition. Neither was it of a kind that the Hindu would reject off-hand. Nor did it create any sudden break in the continuity of the history of the Indian people. The underlying motif of the two cultures, Islamic and Hindu, was much the same. The difference lay only in their technique. When, therefore, the two met on a common soil, the action and reaction between them broadened the basis of both and led to a unity of outlook and interests. The masses of the two communities began to feel the want of a new order of creative life, of cooperative effort for peaceful living. Their feeling found voice in the preaching of the great medieval saints. A saint is not involved in the battle of percentage. His less heroic work is to send finer waves into the hearts of men.

In the political world, large and powerful states arose. They had their periods of friendliness and times of warfare. Political exigencies alone determined their mutual relationship. But their ideal was high-pitched and their conduct was ever regulated by a generally common ethical code characteristic of the East.

The ancient Indian had always in mind the oneness of his great

country. But his conception of that unity was very far from that of a nation in the modern sense. It was based more on the unity of culture than on the identity of political interests. Likewise, the bond that held together the followers of the Prophet was not political. It was the unity of faith, unity in culture, inspired by a common religion. The ancient Indian, like his brother in Greece, did not consider that an empire was essentially to give whatever might be worth having in life. What he aimed at was the fulfilment of life for the individual and for the community from every point of view, economic, cultural and spiritual. That the city states of old Hellas achieved that end in spite of their small size does not admit of any doubt. It is the city states like Athens and Thebes that gave to the world the glorious Hellenic civilisation.

The same is true of India. The fact that the India of yore was split up into a number of kingdoms did not prevent the evolution of a truly unified culture that has survived down the ages —— a culture that is as deep as it is many-sided. Temples and seats of learning scattered all over were and still are to a Hindu of any part of India equally sacred and equally his own. The devout Hindu was ever reminded of the oneness of the country as he daily worshipped its seven big rivers. The fellowship of the people was directly emphasized. In the Vedic times, the hymn they loved to chant was :

"Together wak ye, together speak ye, together know ye your minds.

"Let your resolve be one, let your hearts be of one accord.

" Let your minds be united that your assembly may be happy."[1]

Indo-Aryans visualised the need of States as an aid to the functioning of the spiritual purposes of life. Politics had its place in the scheme of practical life as a means to spiritual ends. With modern nations, politics is an end in itself, both as an intellectual pursuit and as a material goal. It owes allegiance only to economics, inasmuch as it evokes economic sanction, though, at the same time, the two are already engaged in a conflict, politics raising national walls and economics aiming at international contacts. The world is now moving through times when the problems of living have almost entirely eclipsed all other issues of life. Quite in the fitness of things, politics nowadays is tactical enough to unfurl off and on the economic flag. Yet there is a kind of fashionable thinking that tends towards making a fettish of economis. Likewise, in days gone by cultured people felt that they should over-emphasise spiritual obligations. The Upanishad warned such people that one would no doubt get into darkness by being materialistic, but heavier darkness would overtake him who might be given too much to spirituality. In its healthy days, Indian culture set bounds to other-worldly pre-occupation. It was not even gay idealism that was encouraged but a well-balanced order of knowlege and deed.

The unity that India looked to was that of a common mental outlook.

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1. The Rigveda, X, 191, 2-4.

What India took care about was that she might be "a university of culture", comprising many and diverse racial habits, linguistic orbits, geographical bounds and local politics and interests. She was not only not disturbed at her diversity of people but offered them opportunities for their unfoldment, trusting in her genius that she would be able to knit them together into a beautiful whole. She, therefore, little bothered about the empire ideal of unification. Here was, on the contrary, the ideal of human unity. To this end she set to developing an uncommon consciousness of spiritual values, the efficacy of which was proved on all occasions of impact against alien races. It was no wonder that the presence of the Muslim in India before long roused the country to creative thinking for a richer harmony of life. For we must remember that the ultimate reaction of the Indo-Muslim encounter was the descent of a good many messengers of love.

There were numerous autonomous states in the vast country. As long as their internal mechanism worked well, it did not matter much to the masses if the classes amused themselves from time to time in martial sports. While Amirs and Rajas were involved in warfare, the masses, Hindu and Muslim, under the lead of their Faqirs and Sadhus, were pursuing the path of peace and contentment. Even a change of government was not seriously felt beyond the narrow grove of court life; to the subject in general it was really a matter of very little import. The history

of India has for its main spring of movement "not wars and emperors, but saints and scriptures."[1] When any Indian state acquired hegemony over others, the home departments of the subordinate states were left untouched, leaving the people to do pretty much as they did before. It is the greed of modern humanity that is busy building big empires. It is the loss of the spiritual hold on mankind to which modern empires and imperialistic activities have to be traced. There is nothing sacrosanct about political nationalism. But obviously, it is a real necessity inasmuch as the want of it means insult to the personality of a people and injury to their manhood.

In India, however, the rise of empires was followed by the moral effect of widening the mental horizon of the people. The impact of larger events led to big action. For instance, it was possible for Buddhism to carve a triumphant career because there was the great Maurya Empire to back it up. The Gupta Empire stretched the vision of the people far and wide, and the panoramic presentation of India as one undivided country by Kalidas in his Meghadutam was thus a work of art born of the realities of living life. When, however, empires fell, following the laws of reaction, the vitality of the people was for the time being lowered. Disintegration of the empire meant also the degeneration of the people. The condition of the country on the decline of the Mughal empire is a glaring instance of the point. Yet, on the whole, Indian life did not

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1. S. Radhakrishna's article on Religion: A Plea for Sanity (Triveni, November, 1938).

wholly depend on the presence of an empire for either the general growth of unity or the unfolding of its human qualities. The evolution and spread of a real all-India culture was ever the main spring of Indian unity, and that culture was till but recently governed by the innate spirituality of the Indian people. Had there not been this fundamental unity, Indians would not have outlived the ruin of so many empires through the ages.

From what we have said in the two previous chapters, it is abundantly clear that the principles underlying the Hindu and the Islamic conceptions of society and state were very similar. The cultures of both the communities were largely spiritual. The process of unification was thus an easy and natural one. But when India came to stand face to face with an industrial civilisation, the circumstances wholly changed. Any attempt even at conciliation, not to speak of unification, became a very difficult task. The culture of India, mainly spiritual, and the aggressive culture of Europe, largely industrial, ranged against each other in contest. It led to most incongruous results and created an atmosphere of unreal politics, from which India has not found it easy to free herself. The old-time relationship between the Muslim and the Hindu was mostly an affair of the heart, while in the present industrial age the heart seldom plays a part at all. A spirit of barter, of contract, rules human affairs to-day.

Having tried to locate the foundation of Indian nationalism, let us now give a sketch background of the general race relations obtaining in

India.

The Vedic people came to India at a time when a great civilisation was already a closed chapter. The remains of it, now known as the Indus Valley Civilisation, have been brought to view at two places —— Mahenjo Daro and Harappa in Sindh and the Punjab. Some of these are shown in the Indian Museum —— samples of Mahenjo Daro pottery, the Harappa collection of women's jewelleries, etc. In the Museum is also exhibited the Indus Valley method of preserving dead bodies. It was a well-known custom of the Babylonians, and of the Dravadians too. The story of embalmbing of King Dasratha's body in the Rayamana also bears on the point. Probably, the chief of those who are counted amongst the authors of this highly developed prehistoric civilisation are the Dravadians —— a race related to the ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, and Egyptians.

The Dravidians, the first foreign race in India, form the radical element of our present Tamils, Telegues, Malayalis etc., people who later in the historical period founded the powerful empires of the South —— the Andhra, the Rashkuta and the Chera. The radical element of the present Bengalis, Gujaratis and Marathis is considered to be the Alpine race —— a branch which was the second to have entered into India from beyond the Pamir plateau. The next to come were the Nordic Aryans —— the people of the Vedas. They had to face the Dravidians (Munda Tribes) in possession of the country. Battles were fought and destruction followed.

The pre-Aryan peoples of India were not unblest by civilisation. They were sturdy fighters, too, and possessed impregnable excellent fortresses. It became verily an uphill task for the Aryans to overpower them. They sent up fervent prayers to their gods for aid in the work of annihilation. These prayers form a good part of the Vedas. But the enemies were far from being annihilated. Talks of truce were from time to time put forward from both sides, though on the whole the original inhabitants suffered defeat at many points. Besides, in the course of time, the brighter culture of the Aryans attracted a good many of the non-Aryans, who began to rally round the new-comers. Though the natives were made to serve as camp followers of the Aryans, they were gradually taken within the fold of Aryan society and Aryan polity. Yet it is equally true that while the conquered were being Aryanised, the conquerors,too in their turn, were unmistakably Indianised, with the result that the Aryan civilisation of the new India grew up different from the Aryan civilisation elesewhere. Likewise, later on, Islamic civilisation in India developed along its own lines, different from the lines of evolution in Persia, Egypt, Morocco or Arabia.

It took centuries for the Aryans to set the new house in order. Meanwhile there went on a brisk exchange of ideas between the old and the new peoples. They adopted each other's art, rituals and social forms, even gods. The pre-Dravidians, who form the substratum of the Indian

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population, are supposed to have bequethed to India the democratic institution of Panchayet. The Dravidians supplied the main stimulus to the growth of the caste system. The material representation of gods and the building of temples to them were also Dravidian practices that were adopted and assimilated by the Indo-Aryans whose earlier gods, primarily nature forces, were invoked at sacrificial altars. Large masses of pre-Aryans were converted into Aryanism and given the name of Vratyas. The holy Trinity of the Hindu pantheon, rendered famous by the Puranas, was the result of a gradual amalgamation of Vedic and Vratya gods.

There are many interesting stories in the Puranas which tell of contests between the gods of the different races. Krishna of the pre-Aryans was an enemy of Indra, the king of the Vedic gods. But Brahmans soon identified him with the great Vedic god Vishnu, with the result that in time he became the most noted of the Hindu gods. So much so that it was Krishna in whose mouth was put the immortal precepts of the Gita. The supreme god of the pre-Aryans, Shiva, fights the family of Prajapati the father of the Vedic gods. Shiva wins and is offered a suitable position in the Vedic pantheon, but he is ingeniously identified with the fierce god Rudra of the Vedas. The conception of the Mother Goddess is by no means Vedic and took shape in later Hinduism mainly through the contribution that the conquered made to the religion of the conquerors. This process of getting in new gods continued long after the Puranic age. In Bengal

under the Sultans, both Hindus and Muslims jointly borrowing upon the manifestation of the Supreme Spirit, evolved a household deity, called Satya Narayan or Satya Pir, who is popularly worshipped till to-day.

Probably as a result of the devastating war at Kurukshetra, narrated in the Mahabharata, the lines of the ancient Kshatriya kings were blotted out; also the higher Vedic types of Brahmanism were lulled into inactivity. The great doings of the period that followed were confined to making laws to maintain the frame of society. Such a measure was naturally dictated by the instincts of self-preservation. The major Codes of Manu and others were now compiled with a view to consolidate the society imperceptibly at its base. It is a characteristic Indian technique. It speaks volumes for the wisdom of these law-givers that under circumstances adverse in every way they saved the country from disruption by releasing social forces without worrying about political implements. When these implements were forged anew by the heroic founder of the Maurya Empire, the principles of govenment, by combining political and social values, were enunciated by the now famous Kautalya.[1]

Anyway, when the next formidable batch of foreign conquerors made their appearance, India had enough social vitality to cope successfully with the situation, even to absorb them outright. These new races, Scythians, Huns, Gurjars and others, came at different times in different groups. The Scythians began their inroads into India from the second

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1. The ideal of suzerain power conceived in the Vedic Brahman literature reappears in Kautalya, pp. 259 & 340.

century B.C. In the first century A.D. the Kushans made their incursions. Their noteworthy Indian king was Kanishka, reigning over an empire covering the Northern India and stretching as far down as the Narbada. Ultimately, the Sakas were subdued by the Gupta emperors. The Guptas were a renowned dynasty of Hindu rulers during the historical period. Their reign is called the golden age of Hindu arts and literature. What is of political importance is that the Brahmans rose to power in society in this age. The most important reason for this was that the Brahmans posed as the champions of Hindu nationalism at the time. Buddhism was, on the other hand, considered to be anti-national owing to its association with the Saka Kings who had been on occasions very cruel towards the Hindus. Rightly or wrongly that was the feeling and the prejudice served as the political reason for the prevalent antipathy to Buddhism, which had ultimately to leave the country of its origin.

The Huns came to India in the fifth and sixth centuries. Though their last king, Mihirkula, was vanquished by king Yasodharma of Malwa, supported by the Gupta monarch of Magadha, the Huns managed to remain for some time in possession of sacred principalities in Malwa, Rajputana and the Punjab. Not long afterwards the original Hun kingdom on the Oxus was knocked down by the Turks.

All these invaders emerging out of Central Asia slowly but surely settled in India. By doing so, they enriched in a way its culture, adding

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to their peculiar gifts of chivalry and art. In regard to religion, they adopted the worship of Shiva and Vishnu. Like the pre-Aryans of the past, these Huns and Sakas were in time admitted into the Hindu social system and, in return, they served the cause of Brahmanism by becoming zealous protogonists of neo-Hinduism. This social synthesis was a great performance on the part of the Brahmans who invested the converts with an ancient Rajput lineage. To-day they are the very kith and kin of the other Hindus, and no one has the temerity to assert that they were once aliens and enemies. To-day the Rajput is tacitly accepted as the descendant of the ancient kings and warriors of the Epic period.

Yet as a matter of fact, he belongs to the same stock as the Muslim rulers of India. The difference is that the Rajput was made a Hindu after he had been to India, while the Turk had embraced Islam before he came to India. Over the whole of Northern India and Gujarat and Bengal, the Rajputs held sway. It devolved on them to rebuild the political frame of India that lost its cohesion after the death of Harsha. In spite of their love of independence, the Rajuts were strongly tribal in spirit and lacked a national outlook in political sense. Their code of heroism, so noble in every way, did not take into account the question of political unity. War was to them not a means to a matter-of-fact political end but a joy of life, not a grim reality but a rousing romance. Romance was the master passion of their life. The vision of an empire did not rise clear before

them. Lacking this political instinct they could not as a whole hold out against the next invasion that burst upon India as a mighty avalanche. From beyond the Himalayas a vast flood of new life streamed onward as one impetuous torrent over Nothern India and soon swept down the East and the South. This was the influx of the Turkish Muslims —— a warlike race admitted but recently into the fold of Islam. Victorious they marched into the country. At first they came for booty. Later they settled down in the country as conquerors. Not long afterwards they began to love the land of their adoption, and in time became as staunch Indians as the Hindus themselves. Thus it was that India became the common home of Hindus and Muslims. A comparative study of the Memoirs of Babur and Jahangir makes this process abundantly clear.

From fashions and festivals down to the very preparation of food, in social or in household affairs, their habits were cast in moulds nearly alike. In the matter of dress too, the two styles continued to evolve a new costume, the Sherwani, the tight-fitting Pyjama and the turban, in which we can hardly detect any Arab or Central Asian influence. The court etiquette became uniform for both Mughal and Rajput. The keen-witted emperor, Babur, felt highly amused at this growing synthesis in modes and manners, and called it the Hindustani-Way[1] —— the way of the Hindu and the Muslim of Hindustan.

With the evolution of new social factors and common economic

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1. Memoirs of Babar,

interests, the distinctions amongst the Hindu and Muslim masses gradually faded. The upper classes too did not ordinarily betray identity except by certain special insignia: for instance, the tilak of a Brahman or earings of a Kshatriya used to show that he was a Hindu. Festivities were also shared by both communities and frequently formed the informal meeting ground for them all. Holi festival was attended to by Padshahs and Nawabs. The Muslim festival of Shab-i-barat in its social aspect was very much like the Shivratri of the Hindus. The visiting of tombs of saints had behind it the influence of Hinu customs. While Islam in India led the masses of the Hindus to revolt against castes and other evils practices, it lost, in its turn, much of its ancient Arabian character.

Once the Muslims were established in the land, the memory of the first bloody struggles began to fade away. Conquerors and conquered drew nearer and nearer to one another, till they realised that they belonged to one great country. This sense of belonging to one country was in time given a common basis of spiritual reality. Political oneness reacted on the religious life of the people. The simple and basic elements of the two faiths were harmonised. Philosophic speculations and investigations were left for the very learned. From humbler quarters arose a body of poet saints who sang of faith, of peace and brotherhood in ardent language to humble folk of every faith all over this vast land. Alongside of these saints, the artists of the two communities put their hands

together in the task of widening life and creating new values to inspire it. Soon beauty blossomed forth in line and in colour, and in song and speech. New arts lighted up the whole land. All around, the pen, the brush, the chisel and the voice delivered the message of a larger and fuller cultural life for India. On the political plane, the work of remodelling was all but achieved by Akbar. But while giving due credit to the great emperor, we must not forget that the Turkish and Afghan Sultans of Delhi and the Provincial Muslim rulers had already done a great deal of the spadework before Akbar set his hand to it.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN OUTLYING PROVINCES

From what has been stated above, it may be thought that life in the imperial capital was splendid but darkness shrouded the outlying provinces. But this was not the case.

Let us take Jaunpur first. It was the great city nearest to Delhi. The culture of Jaunpur is alive in the minds of many to-day. It lives through the gift of Khayal to Indian music. The Jaunpuri style of Khayal is a thing of joy in our daily life throughout India. For this enchanting legacy we are indebted to Sultan Husain Sharqi (1458-79). Sultan Husain was a reputed patron of learning as well. His court was crowded with lights bigger than those that shone even at Delhi. All the first rate

Muslim savants of the East had gathered at Jaunpur. Qazi Shihabuddin Daultabadi, known as the "king of sages" adorned that court. Jaunpur was so educationally minded that even a lady, somewhere about the middle of the 15th century, made a huge endowment for education. This lady, a princess in rank, built a big Friday Mosque with a college and large residential quarters attached. Jaunpur was remarkable for its University, and acquired such a fine distinction as a city of elegance and culture that Emperor Shah Jahan in ardent admiration gave it the charming name of Shiraz-i-Hind, or the Shiraz of India.

In passing we may refer to Kashmir, another kingdom not far from Delhi. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70) translated some Sanskrit works into Persian at least a hundred years before the vast translation department at Fathpur Sikri was created under the auspices of Emperor Akbar. He replaced the Jizya and pursued a policy of benovolent toleration in his hill kingdom.

In the South too, this spirit of goodwill was in operation. The Bahmani Sultans and Vijayanagar kings were constantly fighting with each other. At one time a signal victory was won by the Bahmani Sultan. Thereafter an agreement was reached by negotiation:

"The ambassador of the defeated king of Vijayanagar, Krishna Ray, told Muhammad Shah Bahmani that as the Bestower of kingdoms had conferred on him the government of the Deccan, it was probable that his successors and princes of the Carnatic might long remain neighbours, which made it advisable to avoid cruelty in war; and they proposed, therefore, that a treaty should be made not to slaughter in future

battles. 'Muhammad Shah was impressed, and took an oath that he would himself do it and would also bind his successors to keep to this line of conduct."[1]

But this was not by any means the only instance of an understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims in the Deccan. The finance department in the Bahmani kingdom was throughout in the hands of Hindus. From the time of the second Sultan on, there was a standing corps of Hindu bodyguards round the person of the Sultan. Besides, as time passed, it became increasingly difficult to secure Muslim recruits to the army from far-off Muslim states. The Muslim nobles too had always their own axes to grind, and the Sultans found that they could not be relied upon in times of trouble. As a result of this the number of Hindu officers and men in the army daily increased. This was very much more so in the five States that arose after the fall of the Bahmani dynasty. We read in the Persian annals the names of a good many Hindus who rose to very high positions in these States —— the Brahmans as ministers and the Kshatriyas as chiefs in the army. Besides, a number of Sultans were connected with the Hindu community by lood in marriages. There are two notable instances. The Sultan of Ahmadnagar was a Brahman, Bhairava by name, who adopted Islam and kept on the surname of Behere. The first Sultan of Bijapur was the famous Babuji Khanum, a Brahman lady by birth. But apart from this, Sardars of Jadav, Nimbalkar, Chadge, More

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1. Elliot & Dowson,

and other families were the props of the various armies of the Deccan. Madanna, Kamalsen, Yesu Pundit, Murar Rao are some of the better known ministers. The last general to make a stand for the Ahmadnagar Sultanate was Shahji Bhonsle, father of Shivaji.

But the contact between the Hindu and the Muslim in the Deccan was not merely political. The cultural aspects of it are equally important. In the five states, especially Bijapur and Ahmadnagar, the whole revenue department passed into Hindu hands and the village accounts were kept entirely in vernacular. In Bijapur a new composite language, a mixture of Persian and Kanarese grew up and the Sultan himself has left us a number of pretty poems written in that dialect.

A composite style of architecture, a blend of Hindu and Saracenic styles, also came into existence of which we can still see specimens all over the Deccan.

Not only this, but a long line of saints —— prototypes of Nanak, Kabir and Chaitany of the North —— arose in the South and preached to both Hindu and Muslim a simple religion based on bhakti, or love of God. Their teachings reached every nook and corner of the country and gave it a shaking such as it had never received before.

The presence of a powerful Hindu empire across the border largely influenced the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims in the five Deccan Sultanates. In their mutual struggles, each Sultan sought the aid

of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar and for that purpose preferred to employ their Hindu noblemen as ambassadors. This naturally increased the prestige of these nobles and the Sultans tried in various ways to keep them faithful and loyal. Even after the fall of Vijayangar their cordial relations continued and in their struggles against the Mughals, the Sultans received powerful support from their Hindu Sardars. The Hindu Sardars never formed a faction by themselves, in any state. Generally speaking, they sided with the Deccani and Abyssinian Muslim nobles against the foreign Afghan nobles. So that there never was any communal division in the ranks either of officers or men in these States.

In Bengal too, as in other parts of Hindustan, Islamic culture was making itself felt. A new chapter of cultural growth opened with the 12th century. The literature as well as the religious rites of the Province were breathing a new life and were taking new forms. The idea of One God was no doubt always there in Hinduism, but it was covered by an overgrowth of rites and ceremonies. It now asserted itself again and gradually spread over the whole land, relaxing the rigidity of the caste system and stressing the superiority of a simple devotion over complicated ritualism.

The contact with Islam gradually awakened a sense of social equality and undermined the pride and prerogatives of the upper classes. The following lines from an old Bengali book of ballads, written by Ramai Pundit, faithfully voice their feelings:

"The caste distinction will slowly be broken —— for behold! there is a Muslim in a Hindu family.

"Thou art, O Khoda, I know, superior to all others.

"How I wish to hear the Qoran from thy lips !

"Niranjan transformed to Allah will confer blessingss."[1]

A large section of the masses were worshippers of Dharma —— a relic of the fast decaying Buddihm. These worshippers were opposed by the Brahmans, who had risen to power under the Sen kings. Buddhism was openly persecuted. When Islam appeared, the Sat-dharmis (Buddhists) and followers of other popular faiths felt a great relief. They even enjoyed the discomfitures of orthodox Brahmanism under Islam. They fancied that the God of Hindus, Niranjana the Formless One —— had come to the world as Khoda to punish Vedic Brahmans. Hindu and Muslim masses commenced to take interest in each other's religious observances. Outward signs of this interest manifested themselves. Hindus offered sweets at Muslim Dargahs. They drew so close that the need of a common worship was realised. Sultan Husain Shah of Gaur forged an agreeable combination of faiths. It was the cult of Satya-Pir.

The Brahmans and the aristocratic classes put their shoulders together to stem the tide of these new forces. Yet the crash of the old system came from a Brahman of Brahmans. He was no other than Sri

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1. Dinesh Chandra Sen's History of Bengali Language and Literature.

Chaitanya. He threw overboard the whole paraphernalia of Brahmanic rituals and preached that the love of God was the be-all and end-all of man's existence.

Many of his disciples came from the lower classes of society, and some were from amongst the Muslims. Once, as the story goes, five Pathans prepared for an attack on Chaitanya. Their intention was to loot his belongings. But they were overpowered by the saintly purity of their victim and gave up their plan. They were in time converted and became devoted Vaisnavas, and one of them got the name of Ramdas. At a later period, Bengal produced several Muslim Vaisnava poets. A few of them may here be mentioned by name: Alawal, Ali Raza, Shah Akbar, Nasir Muhammad, Habib, Salbeg, Kabir, Sheikh Lal. Very interesting are the poems of Kanai and Shamser Ghazi. In their padas, or songs in praise of Vaisnava gods, they conveyed a true ring of devotion and reached a high degree of poetic excellence. Side by side with all this, we find the plays of Hasan-Hussain incorporated in the Hindu Gajan songs. Amongst the mystics of the well-known Boul sect, we find both Hindus and Muslims. The name of Lalan Shah is to-day equally dear to both communities.

Chaitanya passed through Gaur on his way to Brindaban. He halted for a few days at a village which since has become famous under the name Tamalatala. He sat at a place under a tamala tree on four sides of which were keli-kadamba trees. It was at this spot that the Sultan's ministers,

Rup and Sanatan, became Chaitanya's disciples. It was here, again, that Sultan Husain Shah (1493-1519) himself saw the saint.

Chaitanya sang the love of Hari. He sang and danced in joy. People felt that the earth under his feet blossomed with lilies as he danced. He gathered crowds as he danced. The Brahmans of Navadwip petitioned to the Qazi to stop him, but the popular government of the Sultan did not hinder him.

The cult of Chaitanya was in its form thoroughly Hindu, and it was based on the Hindu Shastras. Still it may be said to have been influenced by the Islamic idea of equality. With the fusion of ideals once started, the fusion of forms was not a long way off. Here and there began to spring up religious orders which were based on both faiths and both forms of worship. Such an order was that of the Kartabhajas. A Kartabhaja Hindu might not give up sacred thread; a Kartabhaja Muslim might not give up shaving the beard. Sometimes a Muslim became a Karta or teacher. The first teacher, Karta Baba, left twenty-two disciples known as Bais Faqirs.

The ideal of religious affinity took a more tangible and beautiful shape in the vision of Tukaram, the great saint of Maharastra, adored alike by the people and the king. One verse of his says this of the love of God:

"Every sound that we hear is Hari's name, whatever words are or

have been uttered. Tuka says, we servants of Vishnu are fully fed with his love."

Another lays the same stress on the Islamic faith:

"My mind dwells, O! friend, on my Lord (Sahib) who is the Maker,

O! friend, meditate (zikr) on Allah, who is in the guise of all, Says Tuka, the man who understands this becomes a Darwesh."

It is a curious fact that Bengali language and literature owe a very great deal to the patronage of the Sultans. Books on Puranic Hinduism were written in Sanskrit. Under Brahman supremacy, the mother tongue of the masses had no place in literature. It was the new-comers, who, not knowing Sanskrit, took up the cause of the masses. Most of the Sultans of Bengal spoke and understood Bengali. They got the Ramayana and the Mahabhrata translated from Sanskrit into Bengali. Nasiruddin Boghra Khan of Gaur ordered the translation of the Mahabharata. The renowned Maithili poet Vidyapati has immortalised Boghra by dedicating to him one of his songs. The Sultan led the fashion and Hindu Rajas followed suit. Inspired by Muslim example, Raja Kans Narayan employed Kavi Krittivasa to translate the Ramayana. Maladhar Basu received orders from Sultan Husain Shah to translate the Bhagavata Purana. Under the patronage of Paragal Khan, a general of Husain Shah, Kavindra Parameswara translated a part of the Mahabharata. His son, Chhote Khan, governor of Chittagong, commissioned Srikarna Nandi to translate the Asvamedha Parva of the

Mahabharata.

A civilisation depends for its perfection more on the quality of mind which is brought to bear on the facts of life than on mere material achievements, more on how it behaves than on what it possesses. A refinement in human relations is the true test of culture. Viewed from this perspective, we have no reason to look down upon our legacy of the medieval period —— a legacy that constitutes our principal hope for the future.

CHAPTER - SIX

REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

Long before the invasion of Sultan Mahmud there were many Muslim settlements in Southern India. To the South the Muslims had come as peaceful merchants and traders. With them had come numerous saintly figures, through whom the Hindu first became familiar with the devotional poetry and music of Islam. We have it on record that at the commencement of the 9th century, the king of Malabar was converted to Islam. The religion of the holy Prophet must have been preached for a considerable period in the South before such a thing could happen.

In Northern India, the contact between Islam and Hinduism was naturally far more intimate. The Arab conquest of Sindh, temporary though it was, occurred early in the 8th century. Political dealings between the Hindu kings of the Punjab and the Muslim rulers of Ghazni commenced not very much later. Alongside of Muslim kings and soldiers, learned divines and numerous Darweshes entered Hindustan and delivered the message of the holy Prophet far and wide. This message awakened a chord not unfamiliar in the mind of the Hindu.

Before the Ghorids actually conquered Delhi, many other races had entered it from the North-West. But none of these had such pronounced

personality and consciousness of inherent strength as these Islamic conquerors. While, therefore, all previous races had been more or less easily absorbed in the Hindu social system, Islam maintained a distinctive position of its own, in spite of its deeper identities with the essentials of Indo-Aryan religion. Islam brought with it the vigour of a new faith that supplied the springs of adventure in life and the gifts of a rich and living culture. The noble Arabian culture had already imbibed knowledge from Greek, Persian and Indian sources, and with equal readiness had given its own to the world.

For a while, at the beginning, the Muslim occupation of Hindustan was represented more or less by the military order —— soldiers, generals and Sultans. But in time there gradually came into being the Muslim commonalty. When this happened, the common people of the two communities, living side by side, naturally responding to the call of a neighbourly interest, fostered these feelings rapidly, and, in the course of time, the fighting classes of both communities fell in line with the humbler folk. At times, again, out of their own conviction, the ruler and the soldiers took the initiative in helping forward the popular move for goodwill.

The general atmosphere was by and by becoming more favourable to the growth of a united people. Each community was losing its angularities and was acquiring a habit of working for the common weal in social and

economic matters. Nor were the two peoples slow to recognise that in matters of religion, in spite of undoubted differences, there was an appeal of affinities as well. Even in regard to the very fundamentals of faith —— the faith in One God —— the Hindu and the Muslim agreed. The Sufi and the Hindu mystic likewise met on the common platform of ecstatic communion with the Divinity, a state in which communal division finds no place at all. The cultural life of the common people took on the same colour in time, for, as we have seen above, they were more under the influence of saints and mystics than that of Pundits and Maulavis. In music, painting, architecture, language and literature, as well as in economic deals, the two communities evolved a common outlook. Above all, there was the inexorable need —— the downright necessity —— of making a common home for both.

It was the social impulse of the masses that in India from age to age regulated the relations between different races and communities and broadened the base of Indian nationalism. In the past the masses of India made their influence felt in bringing about social harmony between divergent groups and interests. The Atharvaveda and the Puranas in ancient times and the teachings of the Sufis and Bhagats in the middle ages represent the popular urge for amity and the people's share in the moulding of society.

From the earliest times, the path of bhakti was recognised by the

sages of India. The great Risi Narada of the Vedic age was an exponent of this cult. Through the succeeding centuries, however, with the elaboration of rites and sacrifices, and the development of the various schools of philosophy, it dwindled in importance. Krishna's exposition of it in the Gita resuscitated it for a time, till the surging tide of Buddhism engulfed the whole of Vedic religion. The Upanishad, however, continued to be written and never ceased to dwell upon bhakti —— faith in God, God without a second. There is an Upanishad bearing the curious name of "the Upanishad of Allah", written after the advent of Islam and showing that there was a possible point of contact between the Upanishadic conception of "God is One without a second"[1] and the Islamic idea of "There is no God but God."

The vigorous Islamic cult of the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man obtained a ready hearing in India. Buddhism had already given a violent shaking to the caste system and post-Buddhistic India was neither shocked nor even surprised to hear the democratic ideal preached by Islam. The result was the welling up of a number of teachers and sects who virtually accepted the Islamic conception of God. The old bhakti or Bhagawata Dharma thus received a great impetus, and a variation thereof was preached for centuries throughout the length and breadth of India. An innate God-loving habit of the mind and a sense of kinship with all mankind formed the keynote of religion during these centuries. A

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1. Ekam eva Advitiyam (Upanishad).

recognition of the good things common to both faiths tended to open out a unity in religious outlook.

Says an inspired rformer of the early 19th century:

"Where is the Lord, and where is He not ?

"Why do the Hindus and Muslims raise a storm ?

"The Hindu and Muslim have engaged in struggle,

"And the two faiths run into two opposite camps.

"Paltoo the slave says, the Lord is in all.

"He is not divided at all, this is the truth".

The Bengali bard, Dasrathi Ray, has aptly expressed the feeling of the people about religious synthesis. He says :

"Worship, O my mind/! both Nandalala and Khodatala, for the number of thy days are drawing nigh.

"Drink of the Ganges water and say the prayers to Sulapani as well as to Iman Husain.

"Think not of Ram and Rahim as separate, O my soul! worry not over imaginary differences.

"Make the pilgrimage to Mecca and Kashi, detached from thoughts of the world.

"How can there be salvation for thee without the grace of both ?

"Saith Dasrathi, keep faith in thy own religion by all means.

"But never forget that it is only the names that differ, the reality

is always One."

The new teachers came not only from all Hindu castes, including the lowest, but from the fold of Islam as well. The names of Kabir, Nanank, Chaitanya and Tukaram stand out foremost. Tukaram and Nanak were by birth traders, Kabir a Muslim weaver, Chaitanya a Brahman. Modern India cannot do better than look back for light and lead to these great souls. India is one but one through Kabir and Nanak, Chaitanya and Tukaram, one through the message of love and good life that they delivered.

It is clear that in the middle ages the masses as well as the classes lived in amity. In the affairs of day-to-day existence and in much of what are called the higher things of life, mutual dealings were ruled by a sweet reasonableness. It is but recently that the upper classes have pulled themselves away from this ideal, partly swayed by Western influence and partly by sordid motives. But the common people still have the innate feeling of oneness that they had in the middle ages. That unity to them is something more real than the atmosphere of vote-catching and job-hunting that we live in. Thousands of Hindus and Muslims pay their united homage to the Dargahs of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi, of Alaul Haq in Pandua, of Yahya Maneri in Bihar Sharif, of Gesu Daraz in Gulbargah and of Lal Shahbaz in Sindh even to-day. We can yet draw on the legacy of this noble inspiration, and on the basis of our great past can build up a yet greater future.

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